



THE BEACON

OFFICIAL QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE AMBULANCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF VICTORIA

Ambulance Victoria Chas Martin O.A.M. Museum



24th Edition – Spring 2022

\$4.00

Victorian Emergency Services Memorial - Melbourne



Opening Ceremony September 2022



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***A.H.S. Ambulance Victoria Chas Martin O.A.M. Museum***

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Farewell Message from the C.E.O.



Hi everyone,

Hope this finds you all well and staying safe amidst the current flooding which is impacting so many communities across the state.

The current flood situation in Victoria is dynamic and still evolving with further rain projected over the coming days. We are working closely with the Department of Health regarding the wider health impacts and specific assistance for aged care, health facility relocations with interagency support being coordinated to access communities impacted or at risk.

The incredible challenges faced by our communities over the past two years have impacted all of us and taken their toll on many. From the Victorian bushfires late 2019-early 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic and now floods, these are difficult times. I am, however, uplifted by the remarkable examples of compassion and kindness that have been shared with me by AV staff and the wider community. There is no doubt that we are 'better together'. Hopefully we can use these disruptions as a catalyst to reflect and build the kind of society we'd all be proud to live in.

This month we are also celebrating *Shocktober*, AV's month-long CPR and AED awareness campaign. This annual campaign seeks to improve out-of-hospital cardiac arrest survival rates by educating the community about how to perform CPR and use an AED and sign up to be GoodSAM responders. I encourage you to keep an eye out in your local community for opportunities to get involved in a face-to-face or online *Call Push Shock* or GoodSAM sign up session. Check out AV's Facebook page for a special livestream event for all Victorians to learn how to perform CPR and use an AED. You might just save a life!

On a personal note, as many of you are aware since my last message to you back in January, I have undergone surgery and chemotherapy for bowel cancer. The good news is that I am well and in remission, however it has given me pause to reflect on what's important and I've decided the time is right to step down as Ambulance Victoria CEO. AV has been a part of my life for nearly 37 years, and as I am sure you can appreciate, this hasn't been an easy decision but is the right one for me and my family.

As I sign off for the last time as Ambulance Victoria CEO I would like to acknowledge and thank Peter and Barbara Dent for their dedication and commitment to this publication. Your generosity of time and effort in researching and writing up articles for this publication is highly valued by the growing membership of the Ambulance Historical Society and Chas Martin OAM Museum.

Farewell everyone and take care.

Tony

Prof. Tony Walker ASM
Chief Executive Officer
Ambulance Victoria



AmbulanceVictoria

Courage



Those who can truly be counted brave are those who best know the meaning of what is sweet in life and what is terrible, and then go out undeterred to meet what is to come.

The Assistant Curator's Desk



Greetings to all of our museum family, and a very warm welcome to our new members.

With the Covid lockdowns finally coming to an end, we have been able to resume our normal operation. Subsequently, the past quarter has been very demanding, with a variation of tasks to be completed. However, with the 'over and above' assistance of our loyal volunteer team, we have prevailed.

This agenda has included the increasing popularity and bookings of our group tours, logging donated vintage medical equipment, and vintage vehicle maintenance. We have been attending regional events around the state, providing vintage ambulances for film production segments. And now, with the introduction of eftpos, we have a rapid increase in promotional items and book sales in-house, then finally, the production of

'The Beacon', our quarterly museum publication. For our new members this will be your first issue of The Beacon, I hope you enjoy the read. This quarterly is a historic keepsake, the editors are always seeking suitable contributions, so don't be afraid to contact them with what you may have.

A very busy schedule? yes! However, thankfully, the museum crew are head down with their allotted portfolios, and their dedication keeps our organisation moving ahead. So again, thank you to all those who have given their time to this extent and so graciously.

Since accepting the role of acting curator after Chas's passing, and in this short period, I have become even more conscious of the excessive time this role takes. This is both in hours, and personal associations of so many people he had close to him. This was developed over so many years, therefore it is inconceivable that I could, in such a short time, acquire the experience, ability, and knowledge Chas held. In saying this, unfortunately not all bases can be covered in these circumstances. The past five months have presented a challenge for all of us. Given this, there can be personal contact omissions. If this has occurred, I extend my apologies to those who may feel that they have been left out, and even disconnected during this transition. Whoever the new encumberments may be in the incoming committee, they too will need your support and understanding to settle in and carry out their role.

Our AHS AGM will be held here at the museum at 1100hrs December 4, 2022. This is an opportunity to firm up our management group so that we can move forward with a clear direction and meet the challenges of the future.

Dennis Meek, our long serving AHS Secretary has retired, and with wife **Rhonda**, moved to coastal East Gippsland. I wish to acknowledge in particular the work of Dennis over many years as Secretary, and also the assistance he gave to **Chas Martin** building this proud organisation. Well done, Dennis, Good luck, and enjoy the benefits of country living.

Barb Dent will assume this role until a replacement secretary is elected or appointed.

Our AV financial report is being prepared and will be tabled as required at the end of December 2022, as AV operate on a calendar year, not a financial year. Our treasurer **Darrell Rintoule**, as expected has all in hand, budgeted and balanced to the last cent.

I have not overlooked news of the resignation of our highly respected leader, CEO Professor **Tony Walker** ASM. I believe Pete has this covered within this issue of The Beacon.

Stay safe everyone and hopefully we will see you at the AGM.

Ralph Casey
Acting Curator



From the Editor – Spring Beacon 2022

Welcome Spring! I have to look well into the past to recall a winter that has been as long, wet, and cold, as this one, roll on sunshine!

Due to the opening ceremony of the Emergency Services Memorial, the scheduled feature of *‘Our Paramedics of the Air’* has been re-scheduled to a following edition. I apologise for this variation.

Considerable developments have taken place since the last quarterly issue of the Beacon, some are good, others not so good. The good is that **Ralph Casey** and the loyal crew have the museum continuing to develop, and operate smoothly, including visitor wise. The ‘family’ are putting in very long hours, at times into the night, and in inclement weather conditions. Chas would be delighted to see his great work being continued and enjoyed by an appreciative public.



The ‘not so good’ news is, in fact I should say, ‘very disturbing news is’, the loss of our highly respected and supportive Ambulance Victoria CEO, Professor Tony Walker ASM. Tony has had personal health challenges of recent months which he has handled in a most courageous manner. His decision to step down as CEO is an incredible loss to Ambulance Victoria, the A.V. Chas Martin OAM Museum, A .V. personnel, the people of Victoria and beyond collectively.

The Beacon pays tribute to Tony and his achievements over eight years as CEO in the following pages of this edition.

My wife Barb and I were given the pleasure of attending the commemoration of the **Victoria Emergency Services Memorial** September 7, 2022, at the Treasury Gardens Melbourne with the A.V. contingent. This Memorial is a wonderful tribute to our Emergency Service colleagues who sadly lost their lives in the course of duty. Coverage of this moving event appears in a special feature in this issue.

From this edition onwards we will begin a series of the historic accounts of Ambulance Service development in Victoria. – **‘From Where We Have Come’**. This is a result of feedback from both serving and retired personnel indicating keen interest of learning this history. The series will highlight our past trials and tribulations, and the ongoing development, through to today’s achievement of world-leading pre-hospital care, both on the ground and in the air.

It is common knowledge that I am always banging on about our precious state ambulance history failing to be recorded and therefore lost forever. With the passing of our Museum Curator, and my very long-term friend and colleague, Chas Martin OAM in June this year. This has presented on a personal note. Chas and I could relate back to the mid-1960s of our ambulance history with clockwork regularity. We would consult with each other on historic events that occurred over our duration, comparing, uncovering, clarifying, and relying on one another’s account to obtain fact. Now this process has gone, (forever) not only in regard to Chas’s history contribution, but a quantity of my own as well, as that recall in some cases cannot now be authenticated with Chas, and contra wise. So, you can see where I am coming from, and the reality of this situation, as the aging process reaps its toll on the earlier members of the service. That said, the criterion for history does not have to be 50 years ago, in essence, today’s events are tomorrow’s history. Please consider this and send in what you may have of our precious past for the knowledge of those who follow on. We are but custodians only of our service experiences.

Finally, just prior to going to print with this edition last week, we encountered a computer glitch and lost the entire 24 page file, not retrievable! My admiration and appreciation to wife, Barb who, whilst I was re-writing, over-again spent hours throughout the day and into the night on the computer re-constructing this edition we now have. – Thanks, Barb.

Peter Dent

Editor



From Where We Have Come

Ambulance service began in Melbourne in **June 1883** when a public meeting was called to consider a proposal, 'that it is desirable that there should be established in Victoria a branch of the St John Ambulance Association'.

Transportation of the sick and injured was a problem. Casualties were transported by any means that could be devised; a door removed from its hinges may be used for a stretcher or any horse-driven transport. These modes of transport were often detrimental to the patient's condition and at times resulted in the patient's death.



In **1887**, *Lady Janet Clarke*, wife of the first president of St John Ambulance Association, raised funds to purchase six Ashford Litters, which were stretchers on wheels. Four Ashford Litters were placed at police stations: Russell Street, Little Bourke Street, King Street, and West Melbourne, one at the Town Hall, and the last at Eastern Hill Fire Station (**1896**).

The police preferred to use the Hansom Cabs for transportation. It wasn't until a Litter was stationed at Eastern Hill Fire Station where the value of the Ashford

Litters became recognised. In the first 12 months this Litter was called out over 100 times. It was only then that a horse-drawn ambulance was sort. In **1899**, fund-raising efforts raised the money to purchase a suitable ambulance.

In **1900**, the fire brigade requested 150 pounds to meet ambulance costs. With no funds available, the city councils were approached for financial aid, to no avail.

The State's Chief Secretary granted a 125 pound grant, and also informed the fire brigade that in future the police would convey injured persons by cabs and the Ashford Litters and ambulance would not be required. With financial difficulties the fire brigade terminated the service,

1903, St John Ambulance Council asked both the Police and the Salvation Army to take on the running of the ambulance, without success. In desperation the association took over the service and called for contractors to run such a service. The successful tender was the *Fiske Bros*. The first ambulance superintendent in Victoria was an employee, Mr *Harry Osgood-Cannon*. He was paid 35/- per week to supervise the service on the condition that drivers were all fully trained in first aid. Harry Osgood-Cannon was a veteran of the Boer War, a skilled member of the Australian Medical Corps, and well-suited to his position, according to the St John Ambulance Council.

The first ambulance station was housed in stables at the rear of the Windsor Hotel at 25 Lang Lane, off Bourke Street. The horse-drawn ambulance was available day and night and could be contacted by telephone.

1907; The association had purchased four wagons and established a branch station in a garage at Prahran. These new purchases were obtained by donations and payment for transport, well those that could afford it.

Before the advent of the motor ambulance, calls for outlying areas could not be attended.



In **1910** the first motor vehicle was put into operation. **1912**; The transport service was taken over from the contractors, as complaints had been laid against Fiske Bros., claiming that the drivers were not trained in first aid. The Fiske Bros., in retaliation of losing the contract, set up their own ambulance service called St Andrews Ambulance Association in opposition to St John.

1912 saw premises at 436 Swanston Street house the motor vehicles and administration offices, causing more than its share of problems, especially in the phone book, with people connected to the wrong service.

In **1913**, the Postmaster-General agreed to have St John Ambulance phone number placed in the front of the telephone book.

St Andrews Ambulance eventually ceased operation. St John Ambulance Association (SJAA) was split into **1.** St John Ambulance Association and **2.** St John Ambulance Brigade.

St John Ambulance Association gave instructions in first aid, while St John Brigade provided certificated members for public functions in a voluntary capacity.

To be continued.



We welcome the following new members to our museum family and hope you enjoy being a part of this great Victorian Ambulance heritage.

Joanne Algie – Koo Wee Rup, Will Barger – Rosebud, Callum Bloomer – Tawonga, Frank Bonser – Epsom, Mal Campbell – Werribee, Peter Casey – Oak Park, Allan Cross – Junortoun, Kerry Cursons – Numurkah, David Gawne – Shepparton, Bob Gilmour – Nagambie, Timothy Haynes – Warragul, Ewan Humphrey – Caldermeade, Stephen Hutchins – Sunbury, Bronwyn Keenan – Montmorency, Mike McManus – Croydon, Andrew Mentiplay – Mildura, Jennifer Moncur – Balnarring, Philip Nestor – Mt Eliza, Brendan Noone – Wonthaggi, Tom O'Regan – Bayswater, Cassie Parker – Wodonga, Tony Pearce – Williamstown, David Pederick – Ringwood, Des Pinfold – Mitcham, Rod Poulson – Mansfield, Roger Vidler – Shepparton, Naomi Walton – Altona Meadows, Peter Watts – Healesville, Tom Witte – North Haven.

Please join in our museum activities. We are a family-like organisation offering a friendly atmosphere and camaraderie. We take part in both Museum internal activities and external vintage vehicle display events, locally and throughout regional Victoria. Members are welcome to attend and/or participate. Contributions to The Beacon are always sought after. Your AHS Museum membership is yours to enjoy. So again, a warm welcome!

Notice of A.H.S.V. Annual General Meeting

Notice is hereby given that the Ambulance Historical Society Victoria Inc. Annual General Meeting will be held as follows:

Location: Ambulance Victoria Chas Martin O.A.M. Museum, 1/55 Barry Street, Bayswater. Vic.

Date & Time: Sunday, December 4, 2022 at 1100 hours. Light refreshments afterwards.

All positions will be declared vacant: Curator - Assistant Curator (New position) - Treasurer - Secretary - Four ordinary members – Eight (8) positions. Members appointments initially are for a two (2) year period.

Only financial members of A.H.S.V. may nominate, be nominated, or vote at this election.

Important: Please note: Nomination forms and proxy vote forms are available on request.

Email or phone the Returning Officer, **Barbara Dent**, Acting Secretary: vintambos@bigpond.com

0417 290 946 or P.O. Box 451, Albury, N.S.W. 2640.

Nominations and proxy votes must be returned no later than November 20, 2022.

Late returns may be declared invalid.

A Man for Our Times

Farewell to our C.E.O. Professor Tony Walker A.S.M.



A young Tony Walker, early days.

Professor Tony Walker ASM has worked for Ambulance Victoria for close to 37 years in a range of senior clinical, operational and leadership roles across rural and metropolitan Victoria.

Tony worked as an Ambulance and MICA Paramedic and has had a commitment throughout his career to try and improve the care provided to our patients. This has included helping lead several key programs, including the establishment of the rural MICA Program, the introduction of Advanced Life Support for Paramedics, the introduction of rural Community Emergency Response Teams and bringing the Remote Area Nurse program under AV's umbrella. He also helped drive the introduction of pre-employment university education.

For the past 8 years Tony has served as Chief Executive Officer and during this time has led significant transformation at Ambulance Victoria to improve the health and wellbeing of their workforce and the response they provide to the community.

Tony also holds an adjunct appointment as Professor at Monash University and Associate Professor roles at Victoria University and University of Melbourne. He remains a registered paramedic and is a Fellow of the Australian College of Paramedicine, Chair of the Australasian Council of Ambulance Authorities and a non-executive Director of the Emergency Services Foundation and the Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia.

Tony has been awarded the Ambulance Service Medal (ASM) for his contribution to the development of ambulance services at a state and national level. He has also been awarded the Australian Resuscitation Council Medal and included on their Roll of Honour for his significant contributions to improving resuscitation practice and outcomes. Tony was also a finalist for the Australian Mental Health Prize in 2019 in recognition of his work in improving paramedic mental health and wellbeing.

Tony will leave Ambulance Victoria in late October. His decision to step down follows his recent serious illness during which, he has had time to reflect on what's important and feels the time is right for himself, his family and AV to hand over the reins. He will be greatly missed, but his tremendous legacy will remain.

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Moving on to other significant contributions, Tony Walker has been extremely pro-active in the preservation of our state Ambulance history, and subsequently our Ambulance Museum. In 2014, when Tony replaced **Greg Sassella** as AV CEO, as previously stated, those then involved in this preservation were most apprehensive as to where our museum would sit under Tony's administration. This apprehension was to be ill conceived as Tony embraced our museum, and the expansion of this initiative, without reservation. In a very short time Tony had us re-located to a much larger premises at Bayswater, under the development of our late Museum founder and Hon. Curator **Chas Martin** OAM. I believe Tony's belief in, and support of preserving our history, assisted Chas to progress this magnificent entity to today's status.

From my personal perspective, and to enlarge upon the above statement, when The Beacon was created in 2017, it was so with Tony's best wishes and support. This support included delegating A.V. Chief of Staff, **Kerryn Douglas** as my liaison. Kerryn fulfills this role with excellence, to the point where she is considered a member of The Beacon team. Further to this, in 2019 when Chas Martin sent the draft of my book 'Lights Sirens and Challenges' to Tony, which highlights our service in the 1960/70 era, Tony immediately authorised the A V publication of the book, with all sale proceeds favouring our museum. I am confident he has watched over the development of our museum with keen interest and satisfaction, and this will remain as a pleasant memory for him.



What also must be mentioned is Tony's appreciation of personnel. I know of many within our organisation who have received a personal phone call from Tony when reaching a Milestone, or conversely in times of adversity. Under this same cover of this man is his desire for the wellbeing of others. In the earlier months of this year Tony was diagnosed with a life threatening disease. This diagnosis would unsettle the most stoic of us, however, our CEO courageously took his adverse situation to the media, passing on to a wide audience advice, vigilance, and preventative measures for those to avoid this insidious disease.

Tony Walker's tenure as CEO of Ambulance Victoria has not been without extraordinary occurrences, this includes having to navigate 3 years of the Covid epidemic and the massive work load it created. 'Any Captain can steady the ship in calm waters, it takes an excellent Captain to do so in a massive storm and heaving seas.'

So, if we are to judge a man not on his words, but by his vision, achievements, and personal attributes, then Tony Walker walks tall amidst the highest echelon of leaders. When Tony rises from the CEO's chair on the last occasion and departs this organisation, he will do so carrying the utmost gratitude, respect, and best wishes from the entirety of Ambulance Victoria. This will also include his Emergency Service counterparts, the people of Victoria, and well beyond.

CEO Professor Tony Walker ASM. will be recognised in Ambulance history as one of the finest, if not the finest leader, of Ambulance Services in Victoria. This recognition will be inclusive of his tireless commitment to the development of pre-hospital care throughout Victoria, Australia, and internationally.



**C.E.O. Professor Tony Walker A.S.M.**



*Farewell Tony, embrace the future.*

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A Snapshot of Yesteryear

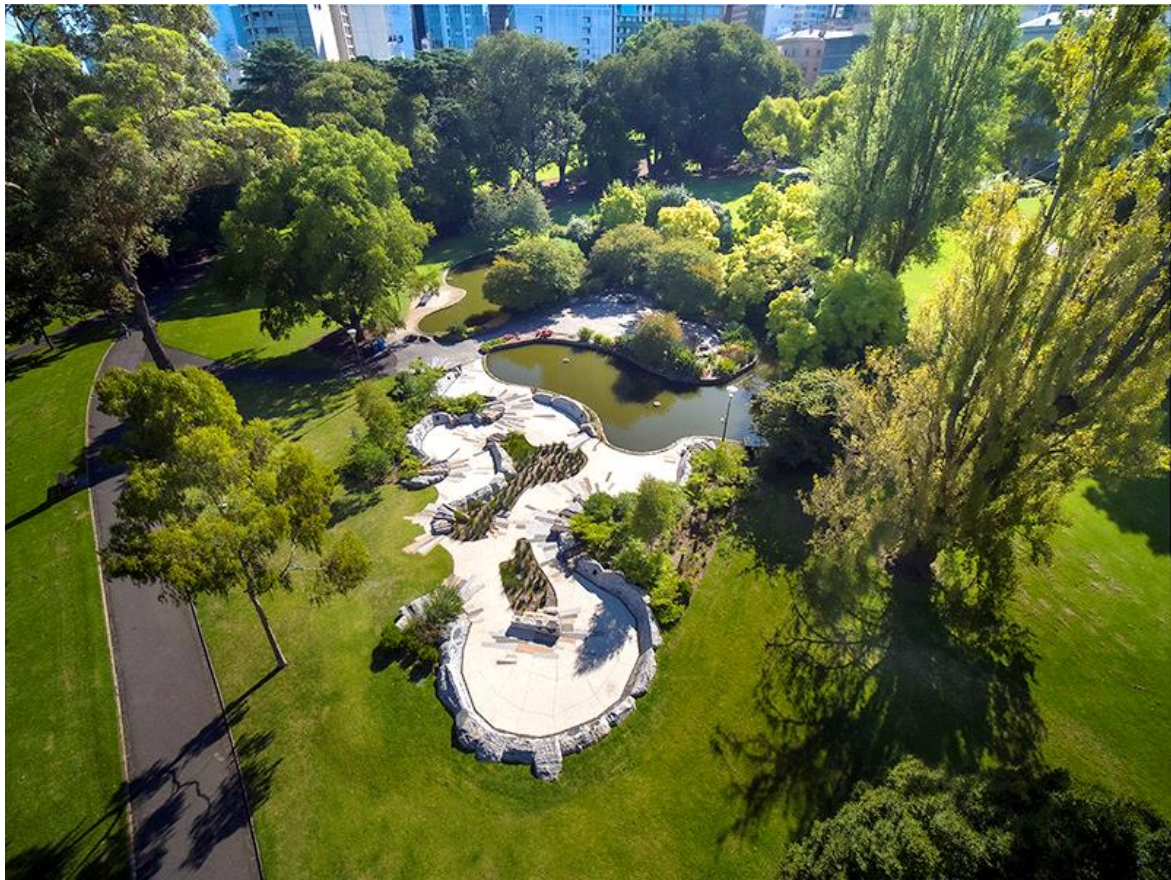


Can you name the ambulance make, model, year, and ambulance depot? Answer – next edition.

Story has it John Clancy was one of the first drivers of this unit!

The Victorian Emergency Services Memorial Commemoration

Treasury Gardens, Melbourne – September 2022



The brave men and women of our Victorian Emergency Services lay their lives on the line, daily, right around Victoria. Their service and sacrifice are continuous; their courage, bravery, and duty of care to others, and their exposure to risk never ceases.

The new Victoria Emergency Services Memorial is crafted from the need to integrate memorialisation of these Emergency Services Organisations into the historically significant grounds of Treasury Gardens.

For this reason, the design has evolved to become a ‘garden memorial’. This strategy differs from other memorials in Melbourne’s parklands, which are largely sculptures and objects placed into the larger parkland scene.

The new memorial will become a place of sanctuary and reflection for members’ families, as they gather either individually or in groups to reflect on the service and sacrifice of their loved ones.

The memorial has 203 name markers, including the plaques from the former CFA Firefighter Memorial at Fiskville, which paid tribute to 67 CFA members and 11 firefighters from its predecessor organisations.

Emergency Services represented at this memorial.

Ambulance Victoria (AV)

Country Fire Authority (CFA)

Fire Rescue Victoria (FRV)

Forest Fire Management Victoria (FFMVic)

Life Saving Victoria

Marine Search and Rescue (MSAR)

Victoria State Emergency Service (VICSES)



AMBULANCE VICTORIA DEDICATION

At Ambulance Victoria our people go to work each day to improve the health and wellbeing of the Victorian community and help save lives.

On the road, by ambulance and motorbike, and in the air, by helicopter and fixed wing aircraft, their work takes them into potentially dangerous situations in all extremes of weather, at all times of day and night.

Tragically a number of them have made the ultimate sacrifice while out working to protect our community and did not make it home to their loved ones.

Ambulance Victoria remembers them as colleagues, as friends and as part of our ambulance family. Their legacy is a reminder that we must look after ourselves and each other, with just as much commitment as we have for our patients.

This Emergency Services Memorial is a special place where ambulance personnel join with partners from other emergency services and members of the community we serve, to remember and honour all those we've lost in the line of duty. Forever part of who we are, may they rest in peace.

Individual Dedications:

1941 – Mavis Irene Clohesy: Mavis Irene Clohesy, aged 20 years, was an accompanying ambulance nurse enroute to Melbourne from Swan Hill. Mavis was killed when the ambulance rolled over at Kerang. The ambulance officer and another accompanying nurse survived the accident.

1962 – Patrick Morrison: Patrick Morrison, aged 25 years, was killed instantly, together with his patient and a travelling relative, when his ambulance collided with a train at an obscure level crossing near Allansford. Patrick was just recently married.

1970 - Helen Lang: Nurse Helen Lang was building her nursing career and engaged to be married when tragedy struck on 19 October 1970. Nurses like Helen worked in patient care, known as 'flight sisters.' They were pioneers for the services provided by Air Ambulance paramedics today. That day, after delivering a patient to Essendon Airport, the plane collided mid-air with a helicopter. Helen was 24 years old. - **Peter Stone:** The mid-air collision between an Air Ambulance and a helicopter claimed the life of Peter Stone on 19 October 1970. Peter was a pilot from Dingley who flew for the Air Ambulance service, which was established in 1962. Shortly after take-off the plane collided with a helicopter over the Nepean Highway. Peter was killed along with flight nurse Helen Lang and three others. He was 30 years old.

1986 - Deleine Bury: Nursing Sister Deleine Bury was 27 years old and had been married just five months before she lost her life in an Air Ambulance accident on 3 September 1986. Deleine was working as a 'flight sister' with Air Ambulance. The Air Ambulance crashed shortly after take-off from Essendon Airport. Deleine, four patients and their pilot were all killed. - **William (Bill) Suhr:** Pilot Bill Suhr had his life cut short in the Air Ambulance accident on 3 September 1986 shortly after take-off from Essendon Airport. An engine failed at approximately 200ft. The aircraft plummeted to ground exploding on impact, claiming his life, along with flight nurse Deleine Bury and four patients.

1998 - Ian Clifford: Paramedic Ian Clifford loved his job so much he would volunteer to help others on family holidays. He began his ambulance career in Wangaratta in 1975, where he met his future wife, **Kathleen**. As station officer in Myrtleford from 1986, he secured one of the area's first four-wheel-drive ambulances. He was killed in an ambulance vehicle accident on 28 May 1998. It was Ian and Kathleen's wedding anniversary.

2004 - Robert Bland: Rob was killed, along with fellow paramedic Philip Oakley, on their way to an accident when their ambulance ran off the road and hit a tree on the Black Spur near Healesville on 2 January 2004. - **Phillip Oakley:** Paramedic Phillip Oakley was both a well-regarded paramedic and member of the State Emergency Service.

They will never be forgotten.



The serene Memorial surrounds.



Our proud A.V. Pipes & Drums Band.



C.E.O. Tony Walker honours our lost.



Stephanie Slade speaks of her father, Bill



A variation of Emergency Services personnel.



Laying of floral tributes in honour of members lost.





Ambulance Victoria dedication plaque.



A.V. Nick Thresher with C.O.S. Kerryn Douglas.



Peter Dent with Fiona Stone, A.V.



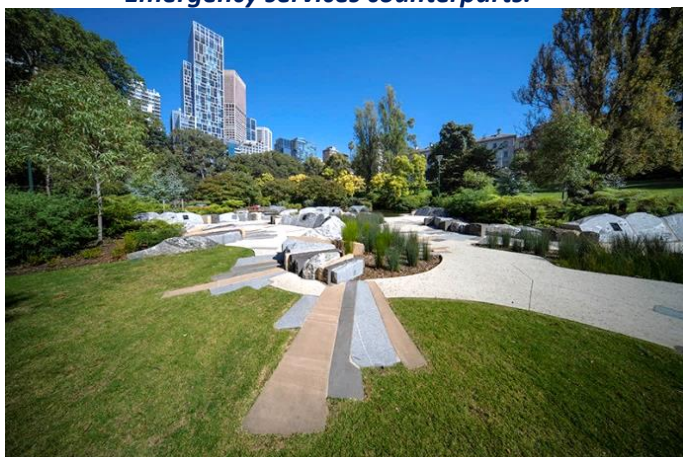
Mingling attendees exchange greetings.



Emergency services counterparts.



Viewing the dedication plaques.



The serenity of the Emergency Services Memorial.



An Honour to Attend

My wife Barb and I felt privileged to be invited to join the Ambulance Victoria contingent for the official opening of the Emergency Services Memorial at the Treasury Gardens, Melbourne on September 7, 2022.

After accepting the invitation, we drove from home North of the Murray River on Tuesday September 6 to our accommodation at Lilydale. It was an inspiration donning the uniform again next morning for such an honourable occasion. We were kindly picked up at our motel by locally residing, and A.V. Co-ordinator Driving Standards, **Nick Thresher** ASM. Nick drove us to Treasury Place inner Melbourne. While Nick parked his vehicle, Barb and I took the short walk to the Treasury Gardens water feature where the Emergency Services Memorial has thoughtfully been located. In this tranquil setting, to compliment this moving event, Mother Nature provided a bright, sunny, early Spring Day, with the surrounds adorned by early blossoms and leaf-budding trees and shrubs, under the umbrella of clear blue skies.

****It should be noted: Victoria Police are not represented at this memorial, as they have their own dedicated Memorial at St Kilda.***

Executive and representatives from our various Emergency Services, family, and friends began arriving around 1000 hrs, taking the opportunity to mingle and chat to Emergency Service counterparts, and with other invited attendees. We met up with AV Chief Executive Officer, **Tony Walker**, Chief of Staff **Kerryn Douglas**, and AV Senior Padre **Gary Grant**, and Nick again, who had returned from parking his car. It was a pleasure to see our **AV Pipes and Drums Band** in attendance and providing accompaniment on the day for the ceremony.

At 1100hrs the dedication ceremony began. **Catherine Greaves**, CEO of Life Saving Victoria, was the appointed Master of Ceremonies. The AV Pipes and Drums Band played to signify the beginning of the ceremony, the first agenda item being the 'acknowledgement of Country.' The MC welcomed VIP attendees, Emergency Service members, family, and friends, and thanked the City of Melbourne for support.

Following this introduction, the reading of the 203 names of members who had lost their lives in the course of duty began, commencing with Ambulance Victoria CEO, Tony Walker, then individually by heads of our counterpart Emergency Services. On completion of the dedication, a moment's silence was observed, followed by a moving rendition from our AV Pipes and Drums Band. The MC invited the **Hon. Jaclyn Symes**, Minister for Emergency Services, to make an address. On the minister's completion, the Chief Officer, CFA, **John Heffernan**, on behalf of Forest Fire Management Victoria, invited **Stephanie Slade** to speak. Stephanie is the daughter of **William (Bill) Slade** of Wonthaggi, who was fatally injured by a falling tree whilst fighting a bushfire near Omeo in the 2019/20 bushfire season. Bill was a 40-year service member of Forest Fire Management Victoria and noted as an exceptionally experienced and highly respected fire-fighter.

Stephanie spoke with conviction of her father's tragic and untimely death, and the ongoing sadness and grief associated with the loss of a husband and father of two. Bill would have been very proud of Stephanie's courageous and heartfelt narration; an account, I would imagine, that captured the hearts and empathy of her entire audience, and also, would have brought a tear or two to some. Her words of father Bill prompted my memory to drift back through the decades and reflect on the many tragic cases attended. These cases would have brought the accompanying despair and grief of Stephanie's family to so many others. These terrible losses also live on compassionately in the memories of the Emergency Service personnel who attend.

With the culmination of Stephanie's tribute to her late father, MC **Catherine Greaves** invited Minister Symes, **Andrew Crisp**, Emergency Services Commissioner on behalf of Marine Search and Rescue, and niece of ambulance nurse **Mavis Clohesy** (killed 1941) to lay wreathes in memory of all fallen Emergency Service members; this tribute fittingly accompanied throughout by our AV Pipes and Drums Band. To complete the ceremony the MC thanked VIP attendees' families and others for attending and an invitation was extended to all to partake in light refreshments at the Treasury Theatre.

By complete coincidence during the commemoration ceremony, I discovered I was sitting beside **Robert Bury**. Robert was the young husband of **Deleine Bury**, our flight nurse killed in the tragic A.A.V. Air Ambulance accident at Essendon 1986. We had an interesting conversation, in which he told me of the devastation Deleine's untimely death had on the entire family 36 years ago. I felt connection to Robert, no doubt due to the memory of Deleine, and her being one of our own.

In summary, the entirety of this Emergency Service Memorial initiative has been well thought out and implemented, particularly the location and tranquil surrounds, I think this setting is truly in keeping of the intended purpose of extending gratitude, respect, and memories of those we have lost.

Living remote, with the tyranny of distance, this event presented me with an excellent and unusual opportunity to meet and talk with a cross-section of diverse operational and very interesting AV personnel. **Anthony DeWit** was one of these people. Anthony is AV Manager of Air Ambulance Services. He has an excellent knowledge of the history of the development of Air Division of AV, both Fixed Wing and HEMS. Walking together to the Treasury Theatre from the Emergency Services Memorial, Anthony and I exchanged information on this particular topic.

Being able to attend also widened my scope considerably for ambulance contacts, and on-going new and interesting content in The Beacon publication, and the purpose of preservation of our history.

After a coffee and a chat at the Treasury Theatre, Barb, Nick, and I headed back to Lilydale. Enroute, Nick asked if I would like to see the newly opened AV Lilydale Branch, (6 weeks ago) I answered in the positive. On inspection, it is indeed an impressive building, superbly fitted out and a credit to all concerned, for comparison, my mind rolled back the decades to when I joined VCAS in 1965, and the old Pitt Street Ringwood Depot. This brought a smile, as did some old faces that imaged from that era, however that's a story for another time.

With the Branch inspection complete, Nick took us back to our motel, where we thanked him and said goodbye. Barb and I are at one that Nick is the best driver/host we can recall of recent times, this is due to his value of camaraderie, obliging manner, and interesting conversation. We hope we could do the same for him one day.

And finally, our gratitude to Chief of Staff, Kerryn Douglas for this most thoughtful invitation, and the effort and personal time Kerryn put in to fulfilling my requirements for the commemoration.

Thank you both, Kerryn and Nick, you made our attendance at this event a most pleasant and memorable day. Adding to this I would recommend colleagues visit to this idyllic memorial, it is most worthy of the time.

It was raining prior to leaving our Lilydale motel the next morning, and the rain continued all the way to the border. How lucky were we the previous day at the event to have Mother Nature shining down on our Emergency Service personnel.

Ed.



Words of Wisdom

Nature is the ultimate power of the universe; it is the creator of all things. Man cannot compete with the forces of nature, it is the boundless beauty of our planet, or a destructive power.

All things are origin of nature, from the stars to the highest mountain, to endless seas.

Nature is the creation of all life that occupies our world, its process is re-generation, albeit from plant to seed, human or animal to grave, to new birth. It is the sunshine and rain, darkness to light, season to season.

Peter Dent

Ongoing Camaraderie and Caring

It was a precious moment for **Marg Martin** at our museum on October 4, 2022. Our CEO, **Tony Walker**, and Chief of Staff, **Kerryn Douglas** attended the Ambulance Victoria Chas Martin OAM Museum to make a special presentation to Marg on behalf of Ambulance Victoria.



CEO Tony Walker, Marg Martin, and COS Kerryn Douglas.

A framed miniature version of the large Tribute Board in memory of Chas was presented to Marg by CEO Tony. This presentation was witnessed by the small family band of volunteers of our museum, and Chas looking down from his Tribute Board.

Tony spoke in warm appreciation of Chas and Marg's tireless effort of bringing our museum to the present status. COS Kerryn Douglas had initiated this presentation, including the framing of this miniature version. To further enhance Chas's memory, Kerryn had a second print framed which now is displayed in prominent memory of Chas in the foyer of A.V. headquarters at Doncaster.

Our CEO (or the 'Boss' as Chas called him) had come for 20 minutes in a busy schedule to make this presentation to Marg, however stayed an hour chatting to all there.

Terry Brooks, his wife **Rose**, and **Gary Dole** took two vintage ambulances to Euroa on the preceding Thursday picking up Marg Martin on the way. These ambulances were to participate in the Euroa 'Show and Shine' on Sunday October 2. This enabled Marg and the others to stay with niece Julie at Euroa, as Chas and Marg had done over the years. A lovely gesture Terry, Rose, and Gary. Seven of our vintage ambulances took part in this regional event; the other five were driven to Euroa very early on the Sunday morning by our museum volunteers, and back the same day. Well done crews!

~~~~~

## *Upholding Our Values of Ambulance Camaraderie.*

In keeping with our values of the AHS museum being a family like organisation, in the sad event of an ambulance colleague, their partner, or a close loved one passing, regardless of state boundary, we can assist the bereaved with a little thoughtfulness. I find appropriate intervals of a phone call, email, or text, checking on their general wellbeing is extremely appreciated and is of considerable comfort. This also upholds our ambulance colleague commitment of looking out for each other, and being there for each other, it's so simple, and delivers so much. Actually, I would like to see this developed into a formal resource that can be accessed by the bereaved and/or those experiencing adversity.

If anyone is interested in this initiative, please contact me. [vintambos@bigpond.com](mailto:vintambos@bigpond.com) or 0427 508888. I will assist personally.

The Beacon also provides for bereavement notification of all passing colleagues, which may include notices, tributes, or profiles, at the discretion of the Editor. Relevant details are required to be forwarded **direct to The Beacon from family or designate**, by email, phone, or post.

It is also hoped in the very near future to re-introduce '*dedicated ambulance eulogies*' at colleagues' funerals. Previously a role of our late Chas Martin over many years, eulogies would be at family request, and presented with dignity, respect, and compassion.

**Ed.**



## *Retiring for a Sea Change*

**Dennis Meek**, our Hon. Secretary of the AHS Ambulance Victoria Chas Martin OAM Museum for well over a decade has retired.

Dennis and wife **Rhonda** have both been very active members of our museum over this duration. Dennis claims our late Curator, Chas Martin coerced him into the Hon. Secretary's position after several bottles of 'Red' at the Commissioning of HEMS 4 at Warrnambool. Rhonda joined Marg Martin at the same time assisting with catering for museum group visiting.

Dennis and Rhonda have sold their home at Noble Park and are returning to the serenity of country living in the Bairnsdale Region, East Gippsland, from whence they came, circa 1970. Both were born in Bairnsdale, Dennis in 1948 and Rhonda in 1949. They were also educated, and began their working life, in this regional centre.

In 1968, Dennis was conscripted into our Military Forces for service in the Vietnam War, during the Australian commitment (1962-1972) and in 1970 he was deployed to 102 Field Workshops, Vung Tau Vietnam.

Prior to Dennis being deployed to Vietnam, he and Rhonda married at Bairnsdale in 1970. They have two daughters, five grandchildren, two great grandchildren, soon to become three great grandies.

After discharge from the Australian Army in 1971, Dennis immediately joined VCAS, his service spanning near 37 years. Most of Dennis's posting was at Waverly Branch, with the last 4 years spent at Beaconsfield, prior to retirement.

After an absence of more than 50 years, Dennis and Rhonda have returned home to their native area and reside at peaceful Eagle Point via Bairnsdale. They will now spend more time with family members and old acquaintances. Dennis intends to build a wood turning shed and workshop and spend considerable time fishing locally. As for Rhonda, her time will probably be spent cleaning, filleting, and cooking Dennis's catch!

The museum family are saddened to see Dennis and Rhonda depart; however, we are most grateful for their long-term input, commitment, and camaraderie at our museum.

We all wish both a wonderful sea change, with long term health and happiness, and hope that they will always remain part of us.  
**Ed.**



*Retiring A.H.S.V. Secretary, Dennis Meek - 'Gone fishing'.*

## *A Snapshot of Yesteryear*



**Last edition: The identification of this ambulance.**

**Answer: 1935 Hudson 'Terraplane' Sedan converted to ambulance.**





## *Our Late Master of Mischief*

*Our esteemed former Ambulance Museum Curator, colleague, and friend to all, **Chas Martin OAM**, was renowned for his robust sense of humour, another characteristic and legacy of Chas, which will live on beyond our time. Since his passing more stories of mischief and amusement are emerging from the background in fond memory of him.*

*From current serving member **Nick Thresher ASM**, a colleague associated with Chas at the former Lilydale Branch at the time of this particular happening.*

We all know that Chas had a heart of gold. Do anything for anyone, just to be helpful.

Not always the case when he worked on MAS Car Division from Lilydale Branch in the early 1990s.

His shift began at 0600hrs each weekday morning. Without fail each day he would loudly announce his arrival at the branch by entering the mess room, turning on all the lights, boiling the kettle to make a cup of tea, opening all the doors, changing into his uniform in the locker room and then, his pièce de resistance – get onto the telephone to report his attendance for duty and discuss with whomever was at the end of the telephone line why he shouldn't go and pick up this or that patient and other worldly matters such as his latest trip around Australia, the fall of the Berlin Wall or what he had for dinner the night before.

Now none of this would have been a problem except that this was pre-bedrooms in a quiet part of the branch days. Lilydale night shift had two mattresses that could be put on the mess room floor, with the red bat phone and a piece of paper on which to write job details down on, by your pillow. It is true that Lilydale was one of the quieter branches in the Metropolitan Region in those days and once the afternoon transport shift knocked off at 2300hrs, it was customary to put the mattress down and say goodnight. Also, all non-emergency cases after dark in the Yarra Valley would be given to Lilydale so that the call branches at Healesville and Yarra Junction would be left undisturbed and kept in reserve for the big one. This did often mean that a Lilydale night shift would undertake a long-distance transport from the Valley to Maroondah Hospital at best or possibly further down the line towards the City.

It is also true that we were at work, and sleeping was not an entitlement. It was a privilege that was enjoyed rather than expected. To have Chas bounce in, full of the joys of spring and as loud as the QEII coming in port, was not often appreciated.

Chas was politely asked by many to quieten down in the mornings to which a resounding “*I’m awake and now so are you*” was his reply. There were also several profanities in this response.

Two young Ambos at Lilydale decided to seek retribution. An elaborate prank was devised by them both to teach the old fellow a lesson. Working on the basis that it is easier to seek forgiveness rather than permission, they put together a cunning plan for when they were on night shift together and Chas would be there in the morning. Nobody else knew what was about to happen.

The afternoon transport shift went home around 2300hrs. The hydroboil hot water service was switched off, the plug top on the kettle electrical cable was disabled and the old kettle that could have been filled with water and put on the gas ring was filled with water, and then put into the freezer along with Chas’s favourite tea mug that was also filled with water. The internal telephone (not the red ‘bat’ phone) was unplugged and hidden.

And now the sting – one young Ambo provided the thread and the other his wife’s sewing machine. Chas’s locker was accessed, and three pairs of uniform trousers were ‘re-engineered’ by having the left leg double stitched across at knee height (they had observed that he always put his right leg in first).

Picture the scene. It’s just before 0600hrs on Monday morning. The dawn chorus is just waking up and in comes the Kilsyth hurricane. “*Come on, wake up you lazy #\*^!+ -#’+!’*”, *get up and do something useful for once you slack #!\*^#!=\*+>*” plus all the other usual abuse that was experienced on such occasions.

After turning on all the lights the next stop was a cup of tea. The laws surrounding what can be published and what cannot prevent reporting the words from Chas that were heard all over the Yarra Valley. Next was an attempt to call in to the Communications Centre. No telephone was found. Profanities never heard before resounded around several suburbs. All that was now left of his morning ritual was to get changed into his uniform and leave the branch.

It was best described as a crashing sound into other lockers that would have wakened the dearly departed, followed by words that would make a soldier blush.

In the days and weeks that followed nothing changed. In fact, the early morning reveille took on a more severe form to the point that night shift crews set alarms to avoid the shock arrival of our beloved car division driver.

It would be inappropriate to name the perpetrators of this mischievous act, yet we are grateful to Chas, 248 & 257 for giving us a long-lasting memory of our dear Chas Martin.

### **The Guv'nor 840**

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From another colleague emerges the following account: Chas, after being on leave, came back on rostered shift at his normal depot, early as usual, the depot seemingly unattended. On entering, Chas heard the change room/amenities shower running and assumed a late finish colleague was within showering. It was a very chilly day. Chas went to the cleaning room and obtained a large bucket, filling it with the coldest water possible, then returned to the shower room and promptly threw the contents over the top of the shower door onto an unsuspecting victim.

The reaction forthcoming was totally unexpected by Chas. An extremely loud female, shrill squeal, was relayed from the shower bay, followed by a volley of most non lady like obscenities. We will never know who received the biggest shock Chas, or the innocent victim! My informant tells me that our 'Damsel in Distress' understandably never opened the shower door to identify the perpetrator of this evil deed, which in any event would have been to no avail, as Chas had fled the building.

Chas, being on leave, had never been informed of our recent female paramedics having been posted to this branch. This certainly was not the most prudent way to begin the process of integration of the fairer sex personnel into our Ambulance service!

Surely ambulance colleagues, male and female, current and former, Nick, a few others, and I can't be the only ones with mischievous and humorous stories such as these. Please let The Beacon have them to share with others, a most important part of being a paramedic is a keen sense of humour and having a good laugh. Without this we leave ourselves exposed to stress. We will write the story for you, to your details, or help you write it yourself, and, if desired the article can be completely anonymous, whichever suits. Factual humour such as this is far superior to synthetic versions, and they are recorded as 'humorous ambulance history'. **ED.**



Ambulance
Victoria



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In bank reference field insert – **Surname** (Essential) and **Member**.

Remembering

West Gate Bridge Disaster 1970

At 1150 hrs October 15, 1970, a section of the under construction West Gate bridge collapsed, taking the lives of 35 of the 80 bridge workers. This tragedy still sits in history as Australia's worst industrial disaster, It also records a day of reckoning for our state Emergency Services.

However, the collective effort of these Emergency Services stood out and performed admirably at this disaster, in particular the Victorian Civil Ambulance Service, the controlling body of casualty evacuation. These 35 men never returned home that day to their loved ones.

The memories of those who attended that fateful day will live on throughout their entire life, and also in the hearts of those who recall this terrible tragedy.



The section collapsing.



Aftermath.



Rescue: S/O Bill McNally, V.C.A.S. facing rescuers.

Walsh Street Victoria Police Murders 1988

Victoria Police constables **Damian Ayre** 20, and **Steve Tynan** 22, were murdered in a cold blooded criminal ambush in Walsh Street South Yarra, at 0450hrs on October 12, 1988.

Lured to this location by a report of an abandoned vehicle, on arrival both constables were shot at close range and died instantly in this pre planned, cowardly criminal act.

Police colleagues, Emergency Service counterparts were shocked at the horrendous murder of two young members of the Victorian Police Force, cut down with their lives before them.



Constable
Steven Tynan

Constable
Damian Ayre



THEY WILL BE REMEMBERED ALWAYS

Daughter Follows Dad in Regional Ambulance.

At the young age of 18 years, Wodonga born and bred, **Grant Parker** made application to become an Ambulance Officer with North Eastern & District Ambulance Service. Grant was duly accepted and commenced duty on April 9, 1980, at Wangaratta H.Q. under the guiding wing of Superintendent/Secretary **Reg Leister**. Unbeknownst to Grant at the time, this career choice was to span his entire working life.

Under state guide lines of this era, Grant was required to attend the Ambulance Officer Training Centre, (AOTC) to attain 'ambulance student level' at Vale Street South Melbourne. The 4-week in-house course commenced on April 14, 1980, in group 10C. Returning to Wangaratta H.Q. on completion of the course in May 1980, Grant was posted to the Wodonga Branch, in his home town. For the first 6 months, Grant had to run with another Qualified Ambulance Officer, then on completion of exams was able to run single officer. This also involved relieving duties with his first relieving branch being Tallangatta. The Tallangatta depot roster was 10 days on, 4 days off, one man up. The 10 days roster duration comprised of being on duty throughout the day, then on call that night until the next morning day shift, this equates to 10 days 24/10.



MICA Paramedic Grant Parker with A.C.O. daughter, Cassie Parker crewing together at Tallangatta.

Grant had become a fully qualified Ambulance Officer in 1983, and after 14 years stationed at Wodonga and relieving at Tallangatta, he decided in 1997 to further his career qualifications and attain MICA accreditation. With MICA added to Grant's resume for the first year he was required to work with a fellow MICA Paramedic in a 2-man crew situation. When completed, Grant could then operate solely with his MICA duties at Wodonga Branch. He remained at Wodonga for 24 years in this capacity, however after 24 years at Wodonga, and a total of 37 years' service with Ambulance Victoria, Grant could see retirement on his horizon. I believe it was always his vision to complete his impressive career in the

small town of Tallangatta, so in 2019 Grant transferred back to this lake-side country town, whilst still living in Wodonga. Ambulance crewing at Tallangatta had changed since his leaving in 1997 to attain MICA, namely through the introduction of the A.V. 'Ambulance Community Officer' system A.C.O. (this is a separate operation to A.V. 'Community Emergency Response Team' CERT) and meant Grant had access to on call A.C.Os to assist him when on duty.

I asked Grant if he could relate any amusing happenings in his time with A.V.? He recalled one incident that occurred at Wangaratta H.Q.: Apparently an S.O/Comms Officer at Wangaratta didn't like the 'Boss'. This bloke happened to be on H.Q. Radio control, with another person in the control room talking to him. Unbeknownst to this S/O, a book had fallen onto the radio broadcast foot treadle and opened it for broadcast. So, off he goes slagging the Boss with plenty of obscenities thrown in. This broadcast went out to all cars, including the Boss, who was out and about in his Superintendent's vehicle. This only ceased when a crew rang control by phone, as control broadcasting overrides vehicle radios. I believe there was quite a bit of explanation required on the Boss's return to H.Q.!

Grant married **Susan (Sue) Lehmann**, a farming family's daughter from Talgarno, near Tallangatta, in 1988. This union brought 2 daughters – Kate Ellyce and Cassie Michelle.

With Grant's return to Tallangatta in 2019, **Cassie Parker**, Grant's younger daughter, became interested in Ambulance. Cassie, then 24 years of age, had attended Wodonga Tafe and Latrobe University respectively and obtained her nursing degree and worked as a practice nurse at Wodonga. This qualification placed her ideally to become an A.C.O. which did occur, and Cassie began to crew with Dad at Tallangatta. Cassie says this was amusing at times in the company of patients and others,

“Yes Dad, no Dad, what do we need to do Dad?” As you can imagine, frequent explanation of a father and daughter crew were forthcoming! With Grant’s pending retirement, Cassie decided to take up the batten and keep Ambulance in the family on a professional basis. Cassie, in a few weeks, will qualify as a Graduate Paramedic at Federation University at Ballarat. Cassie has completed the 1-year mandatory bridging course of ‘nursing to Paramedic’. Both Grant and Cassie say that in some way this is sad because Dad and her will never get the opportunity to work together as fully fledged paramedics, as Grant will have retired. However, this situation does not ebb the huge and proud smile on Grant’s face, of his ‘Ambo’ daughter Cassie.

In a further interesting conversation with Grant, he spoke of the cross-border co-operation of both Victorian and NSW Ambulance Services and concludes that without this NSW/ Vic border co-operation, further servicing difficulties would be experienced by the Wodonga Branch. Despite the enormous growth pattern of Albury and Wodonga over the years, Grant says when he was first posted to Wodonga in 1980, there were 2 day shift and one afternoon shift ambulances on duty. In the mid 1980’s Wodonga got a third dayshift which equates to the same number as today.

On Saturday October 15, 2022, at the end of his shift at Tallangatta, Grant Parker will end a stellar Ambulance career, he will be farewelled by his colleagues, A.V. management, friends, relatives, former patients, and many other well-wishers.

In retirement, Grant will fill in his time replicating the old Tallangatta Railway Station, operating a miniature railway. He will be accompanied at times by his two young (apprentices) grandies, *Elsie* and *Emilia Charlton*.

An interview that took place 42 years prior at North Eastern and District Ambulance Service H.Q. Wangaratta, has yielded a most worthy result for both parties.

Grant Parker’s proud career now lies behind him, Cassie Parker’s lies before her. I have no doubt that Cassie’s career some years down the track will end with the very same illustrious achievement as ‘Dad’s’.

Good luck to you both!

Ed.



THE BEACON

OFFICIAL QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE AMBULANCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF VICTORIA

Ambulance Victoria Chas Martin O.A.M. Museum



*The Beacon publication is dedicated to all
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GO-SLOW CLAMP ON AMBULANCES

A GO-SLOW order is almost doubling the time Melbourne ambulances are taking to arrive at accidents, according to police.

Police patrols have been angered by the delays. They have waited up to half an hour for an ambulance to attend seriously injured people.

Ambulance men said this

week they have received notices forbidding them to travel at more than the speed limit.

Top speed in the city has been fixed at 25 miles an hour. The 30 m.p.h. limit has to be obeyed in the suburbs.

But a spokesman for the Victorian Civil Ambulance

Association denied there was a speed limit on drivers.

However, he refused to comment on police reports of ambulances arriving late.

Ambulance men said they were told there had been too much speeding to accident scenes and reckless driving was endangering other lives.

Any driver breaking the speed limit would have to give a satisfactory explanation.

One of the worst cases of delay happened half a mile from the Victorian Civil Ambulance city base.

Late last week a man collapsed in heavy rain near Victoria St.

Police were quickly on the scene, but had to call three times for an ambulance.

It arrived 25 minutes after the first call.

Police checked up on the delay and found the ambulance had been on another call when the base was first contacted.

Other ambulances were at the base being cleaned. But officials refused to send out a clean ambulance in the rain.

A senior police officer said this week he considered the speed ban stupid.

Ambulance drivers should be allowed to travel at top speed to an accident and use their own discretion on the return trip, he said.

Many people owed their lives to the prompt attendance of accidents.

"Imposing a speed limit could be the signing of a number of death warrants," he claimed.

Ambulance, With Passengers, Towed To Hospital

AFTERMATH OF ACCIDENT CALL

Despite heavy traffic on the increasingly busy highway through Werribee attendance at only one accident on the road was reported by the secretary of the Werribee branch of the Geelong Ambulance Service (Mr. A. E. Chittock) at the completion of the holiday period.

On January 2, Mr. I. Rutter, of the National Bank staff, Werribee, with his wife, his mother and his two children were travelling by car towards Geelong near the 25-mile post when an approaching car skidded in gravel and struck Mr. Rutter's car which overturned. Mr. Rutter received minor injuries, his wife a lacerated scalp, and his mother shock while the two children suffered minor lacerations. After treatment by a Werribee doctor to whom they were brought by Werribee ambulance they were allowed to return home.

A man and a woman, passengers in the second car, were suffering from severe shock and were being taken to Geelong by a second ambulance which arrived at the scene following a radio appeal from the Werribee unit. At the Corio crossing another car crashed into the rear of the ambulance. The impact through the man forward and additional injuries were a cut lip and broken dentures. The front of the ambulance, which had been bumped into another vehicle received severe damages and had to be towed to Geelong. Five other cars in the bumper to bumper crash were also damaged.

Hospital Position Outlined

NO REASON TO DEPART FROM PREVIOUS DECISION

Concern expressed by some members of the Werribee Community Hospital Committee that the erection of an ambulance station at Werribee may re-act against the building of the proposed hospital in the district have been investigated by Hon. G. L. Chandler, M.L.C. As a result the following letter has been received by Mr. V. Mayall, president of the Werribee Community Hospital Committee, from the Chairman of the Hospital and Charities Commission (Dr. J. Lindell):—

"The Commission has not changed its attitude towards the provision of a hospital, the tenor of which I conveyed to you when I visited Werribee in May last year.

"We told you then the Commission would assist the Committee to build a hospital of approximately 20 beds and we suggested that the Committee's proportion of the cost would be met by the provision of £36,000. I told you, too, that there was no possibility of work commencing in the year 1954/55, nor probably in the year 1955/56, but that the Commission hoped that work might commence in the following year, 1956/57. I told you too, that if this was so, the Committee might start work earlier using its own funds.

"The Commission's activities are inevitably dependent upon the availability of Government money, but to the present time we see no reason to depart from the decision we conveyed to you.

"I hope that this will dispel any doubts which might exist in the minds of some of your Committee."

The Banner

THURSDAY, JULY 21, 1955

AMBULANCE SERVICE COMPLETES TEN YEARS' ACTIVITY

Ten years' service to the Werribee public has been completed by the Werribee Ambulance service which commenced operations in the district on July 19th, 1945. This was announced at a committee meeting of the service held this week when it was disclosed that a second vehicle which can be used as an emergency ambulance would be added to the station. The new vehicle was handed over on Tuesday morning.

From a humble beginning, in which a volunteer service staffed and controlled the activities of the Werribee Ambulance Service, the organisation grew until later it became a branch of the Geelong Service with a permanent Station Officer at Werribee. The addition of the second vehicle marks an important stage in the development of this important public utility which has already done much in the interest of district residents.

.....Through the Decades



"We never turn back."



Ambulance
Victoria

Chas Martin O.A.M.

Museum