



# THE BEACON

OFFICIAL QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE AMBULANCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF VICTORIA

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



25<sup>th</sup> Edition – Summer 2023

\$4.00

1920s

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2020s

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### *Introducing your A.H.S.V. Committee for 2022 - 2024*



**Ralph**



**Terry**



**Darrell**



**David**



**Gary**



**Bill**



**Max our dog mascot**



**Graham (Buddy)**



**Peter**





## *Message from the Interim C.E.O.*

**Professor Shelley Dolan RN MSc PhD**

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this summer edition of The Beacon. I hope you have had a great start to 2023.

By way of introduction, I have been the interim CEO for Ambulance Victoria for the past three months pending the appointment of a new permanent CEO. My usual position is CEO of Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre, more commonly known as Peter Mac. Peter Mac is Australia's only public comprehensive cancer centre leading on cancer research, care and education. I originate from England and previously worked as the CEO and Chief Nurse of the King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust and Deputy CEO of The Royal Marsden Hospital, and I am a Critical Care and Cancer Nurse. It has been a wonderful privilege to work with the incredible teams at AV and to work with clinical, operational, and corporate leaders to further improve our work with the health and emergency services across Victoria. I have hugely enjoyed learning and understanding more about Ambulance services in Victoria and Australia and will maintain a very keen interest even when I return to Peter Mac in mid February.

Jane Miller whose current position is that of Deputy State Controller- Health Service Operations with Department of Health has been announced as the new CEO and will commence later this month. Jane is an inspirational and inclusive leader with more than 30 years of experience in healthcare. She has a deep understanding of the health system and a commitment to harnessing expertise to deliver organisational strategy and drive outstanding outcomes for the Victorian community. We look forward to welcoming Jane very soon.

As we leave 2022 behind us and welcome another year, I hope that you have had the opportunity to spend time with others and had some time for yourself, friends, and family over the holiday period.

As ever, as we look forward there is much reason for optimism, and I hope that 2023 proves to be a year in which our collaborations grow and prosper.

Best Wishes,

Shelley



## *A.V. Paramedic's Prayer.*



It has been discovered that, unlike our interstate colleagues and our Victorian Emergency Service counterparts, VicPol and FRV/MFB, our operation does not appear to have a Service Prayer.

This observation was passed to Chief of Staff **Kerryn Douglas**. Kerryn organised an immediate search of this apparent omission. This resulted in Kerryn being advised that NSW Ambulance Service actually have two versions of a Paramedic's Prayer. VicPol and FRV/MFB kindly provided A.V. with copies of their Service "Police Prayer" and "Fireman's Prayer". These two counterpart services' respectively advise that these prayers are especially narrated at both present and past members' funerals.

The establishment of our own "Paramedic's Prayer" has been passed to A.V. Senior Padre **Gary Grant**. Gary is working in conjunction with other A.V. Padres throughout the state to deliver a final accepted version of our own Ambulance Prayer. It is envisaged that our Paramedic's Prayer will be completed by late January- early February 2023. It is further envisaged that our A.V. Prayer will also be narrated at members' funerals and where otherwise appropriate.

**Ed.**



## *The Curator's Desk*

I hope all our members and museum friends had a great Christmas and new year with loved ones. The new year of 2023 brings opportunity to continue on with the program of 2022. This program concluded with good results, after a sad, and you might say turbulent, year!

You may be aware that at our **AHSV** Annual General Meeting was held in December 2022. At this AGM I was formally elected Curator of our incredible **Ambulance Victoria Chas Martin OAM Museum**, with **Terry Brooks** as my assistant. I accept this honour humbly, and with gratitude, that I have been entrusted to carry on the great work and development of Chas Martins' legacy. With our dedicated and loyal crew of volunteers behind me, and A.V. support, we can only go proudly

forward. In doing this we will continue to expand on Chas's dream. With us, all our subscribing members will be an integral part of this great journey.

I would like all to know that the museum management is still in the hands of a former A.V. member. Accordingly, I am providing a little of my personal ambulance background; I joined the Ambulance Service (1988-2016) at the time of the change-over period from 16 services to Metropolitan Ambulance Service, (MAS) and Rural Ambulance Victoria, comprising of five Regional Services (RAV). My role was within the communications and technology area of operations. I was appointed Snr. Technical Officer for the Metro Comms project. During this period, I was able to see the growth of the old control rooms in rural areas to their amalgamation through the creation of CAD, and current ESTA at Ballarat and Tallyho. I played an active role, front line with A.V. comms, in the tragic 2008/9 "Black Saturday Bushfires". I also spent 6 years with the CFA, and in 2015, I humbly accepted the Ambulance Service Medal (ASM) for communication services to Ambulance Victoria.

Moving on from personal history, there are several initiatives on the table for 2023, and with our new committee we will prioritise these potential plans and keep you informed. The current major project, working together with A.V. Property, is to secure a second premises close to our museum. This is to enable accessible housing of all of our vintage vehicles. This additional area is required due to our present location being not large enough to support the entire fleet, with vintage vehicles garaged "here and there." Obtaining this second premises is seen only as an interim solution until such time as a very large complex can be acquired long term to house the entire museum. This will include both our Disaster Bus, and Communication Bus, and hopefully, any further acquisition of a larger size. For example, a HEMS helicopter or an A.V. fixed wing Air Ambulance.

It is a personal vision that we schedule another "Family and Friends Open Day". The last family open day pre Covid was a huge success. Another was planned and organised, and again with a potentially large attendance indicated. Sadly, just one week prior to the open day date, Covid forced its cancellation, and only recently has this opportunity re-presented. When dates are decided upon, we will send out advice and look forward to seeing some familiar faces. This also gives all the chance to see **your!** magnificent Victorian Ambulance history that has been preserved at the museum, together with your family and friends.

Together with our loyal museum crew, I am looking for a great year ahead, and to catching up with as many as possible former, and current colleagues who wish to pay us a visit.

Finally, a big welcome to our new **CEO Jane Miller**. When Jane settles in, it would be great to see her visit our museum and see the magnificent preservation of our history and meet the loyal band of volunteers.

Until then, please keep safe and well.

**Ralph Casey, ASM**

**Curator**



## *From the Editor – Summer Beacon 2023*

**Welcome** to the first issue of The Beacon for 2023. As we enter this new year of 2023, we also enter change, and welcome our new Ambulance Victoria **CEO, Jane Miller**. Jane comes to us with vast background and knowledge of the health care system and is an excellent communicator. Jane also comes aboard with enthusiasm and vigour to implement and achieve the changes desired within A.V. We wish her all the very best, and a pleasant and successful future at A.V. in her new CEO role.



Adding to this change cycle, **Ralph Casey** ASM, has officially been appointed Hon. Curator of our **Ambulance Victoria Chas Martin OAM Museum**. Ralph assumed this role in a caretaker capacity after the sad passing of our museum founder and Hon. Curator **Chas Martin**, in June last year. Ralph picked up the batten in this time of adversity, and with his loyal crew of volunteers, kept the wheels turning smoothly. Ralph has gone about his role with humility, acknowledging and continuing the great accomplishment of Chas. We are grateful that the huge void that was created with Chas's passing has been addressed. With all in place, we look to further progression of our unique Victorian public asset, preserving our proud and precious state Ambulance history.

When our museum publication **The Beacon** was created some 6 years ago it was done so with a specific purpose. The purpose, in conjunction with our museum, was to capture and record our Victorian ambulance history and present it in printed form to our members as a keepsake. We now have achieved 25 publications and, in doing so, have covered a number of articles from our ambulance service history. These include our state disasters, and significant events involving our Ambulance Service and personnel. This is an ongoing process, and our history has broad parameters. Also, our history is much more than Dates, Times, Locations, Premises, and Vehicles. It involves a combination of counterpart E.S. support, Salvos, background support, hospital support, and most importantly "People"! These factors all form part of the complete picture of our history and operation to be preserved. As we gather this information in this regard, we will present it to our readers.

In this issue we continue the further account of our state ambulance history. Given the feedback, this subject has been well received. I have been fortunate in acquiring access to a wealth of ambulance history. This access covers our national ambulance development of the states and territories from the 1880s onwards. Included in this information is some history of ambulance development in Great Britain. This source also details ambulance vehicle design, engineering, and production throughout the decades. Complementing is ambulance equipment design, development, and fitting out. On completion of our own state history The Beacon will commence a series of these interesting accounts. Also, in our next edition we will present an interesting article on "*British Happenings*", provided by **Nick Thresher** ASM.

It is interesting that many people say "What is the purpose of history? That was yesterday, it has come and gone" In saying this I ask, then how else do we learn to go forward and progress into the future? We cannot, without knowing the mistakes and successes, trials, and tribulations of our past.

All our thoughts go out to our current land and air "Front Liners" who go forward day to day as we did, facing unknown challenges. Sadly, in this day however, as a legacy of our deteriorating social standards and community behavioural pattern, an unwanted burden has been created and thrust upon our vital, caring, profession. Our dedicated paramedics, as well as E.D. nurses and doctors are subject to unprecedented physical and verbal abuse in the course of their duty. This totally unacceptable, cowardly, and loutish behaviour seems to be without consequence to the perpetrator. It is clearly inevitable without urgent, and serious intervention, delivered with appropriate deterrents, that this "social cancer" will continue. In the case of this occurrence, we may soon see the day when security personnel are in all hospital E.Ds. and travel on Emergency Ambulances as standard procedure.

Please take care, and also care for others.

**Peter Dent - Editor**





## Members' Loved Ones in Recovery



**John and Maryann Clancy's** daughter **Jane** has undergone the ultimate in cardiac surgery at the Alfred Hospital. Jane has displayed outstanding courage with this extensive surgery procedure. John and Maryann were at Jane's side during the critical stages, post operative. The family has strong spirit, and Jane was in the minds and hearts of many others, during her surgery and afterwards. We wish Jane God's speed for a rapid recovery, and a restful period for John and Maryann.

**Bill Redpath's** wife **Heather** has been going through a very trying time with severe pain problems post-surgery. Heather is now home, and we hope, comfortable and pain free, with Bill in apron, and Heather the bell, in reverse rolls to previously! Our museum family wish you all the best Heather.

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## Words Fail Us .....

**Every member** of our Emergency Services, present and passed, throughout our nation, is shocked and saddened by the loss of these two members.

QLD Police constables **Keely Brough and Randall Kirk** were murdered in cold blood in the course of their duty. These two young, dedicated people with their lives ahead of them, struck down by three cowardly assassins bullets without mercy. I believe that every member of an Emergency Service uniform, present, and past, will grieve for Keely and Randall. Our hearts go out to their loved ones, colleagues, and also to the QLD paramedics who attended.

The memories of Keely and Randall will be treasured always, alongside our Victoria Police counterparts, **Steven Tynan 22, and Damian Eyre 20, - 1986, Angela Taylor 21, - 1986, Rodney Miller 35, and Gary Silk 34, - 1998.** These young lives were also prematurely ended by cowardly criminals; Angela by a car bomb, the others ambushed when answering hoax calls to the fatal location.



Queensland Police officers Constable  
Keely Brough and Constable Randall Kirk

*Images, courtesy of Ted Van Dyken, Signal 8*

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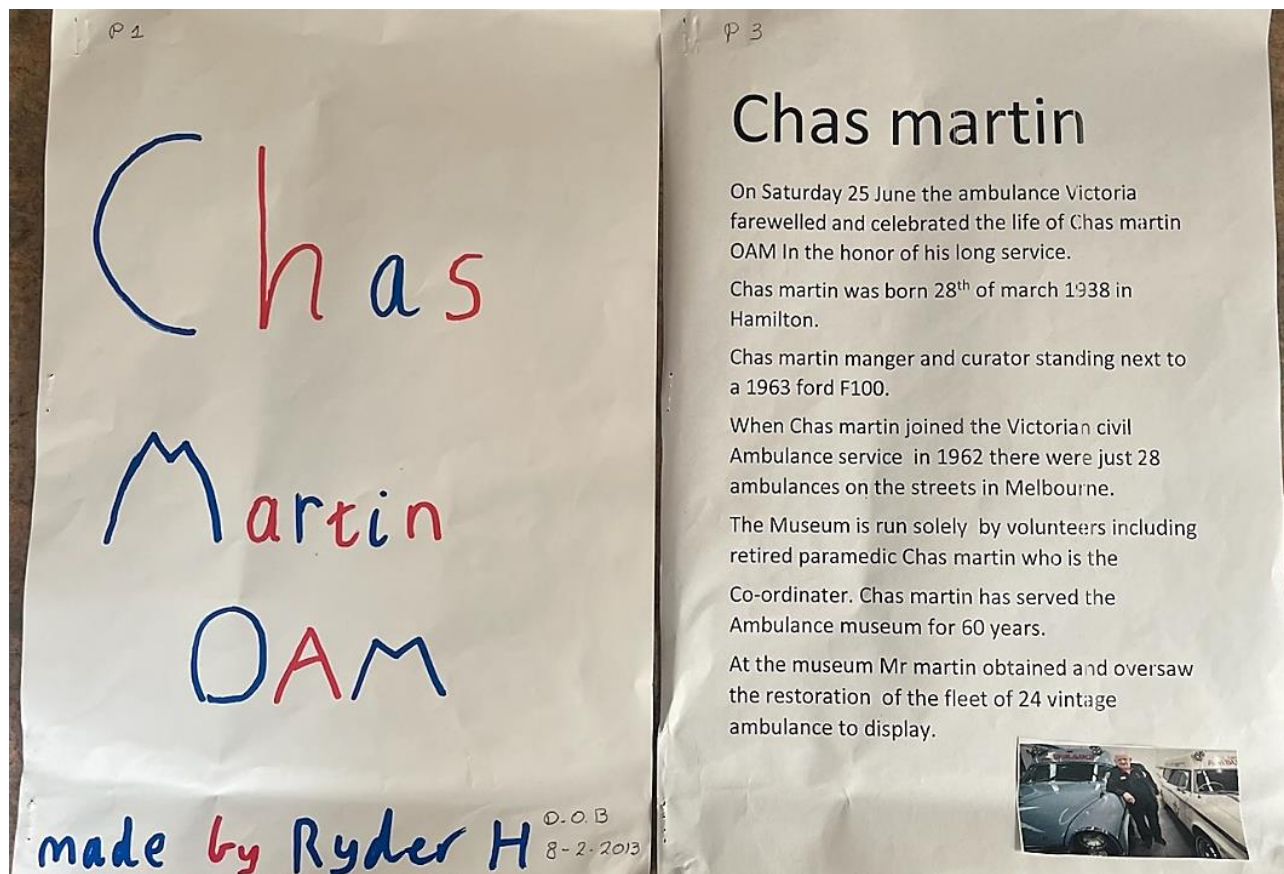
## Courage



***Strength and courage aren't measured in medals and victories. They are measured in the struggles they overcome. The strongest people aren't always the people who win, but the people who don't give up when they lose.***  
*Ashley Hodgston.*

## *A Touching Tribute to Great-Grandpa Chas.*

On Christmas day 2022, **Marg Martin**, wife of our late mate and Curator **Chas**, was handed this treasure from eight-year-old great-grandson **Ryder Hutson**. This had been a very covert operation on Ryder's part, researching, drawing, and writing the script entirely himself. (Mum **Tamara**, typed it for him). What a beautiful and touching tribute to Chas, for Nana Marg, from a very young one. Well done! Ryder, great grandpa will be looking down with a great big smile and cuddle for you mate!



Ed.



**Ryder**



*“From the mouths of babes.”*



**Great-Grandpa Chas**



## *A Vision Becomes a Reality - CellaED Defibrillator.*



**John Haines.**

**John Haines** has been a very patient man, thankfully possessing a great resource of resilience. He is a former member of our ambulance service, with 16 years as a MICA paramedic. Disillusioned with the loss of life to cardiac arrest whilst a MICA paramedic, John decided to follow a personal vision to develop a simple A.E.D. that could be easily carried and affordable. This vision was that a development such as this would be an affordable item in every household, car, workplace or elsewhere. After 6 years of trial and tribulation, continual financial outlay, Covid creating parts shortages, Murphey's law, and whatever other set back that could occur, did occur. However, in late December 2022, for John and his partners, the production line began to roll, the

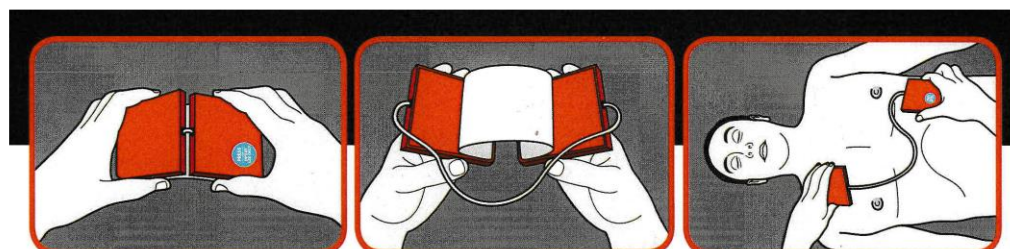
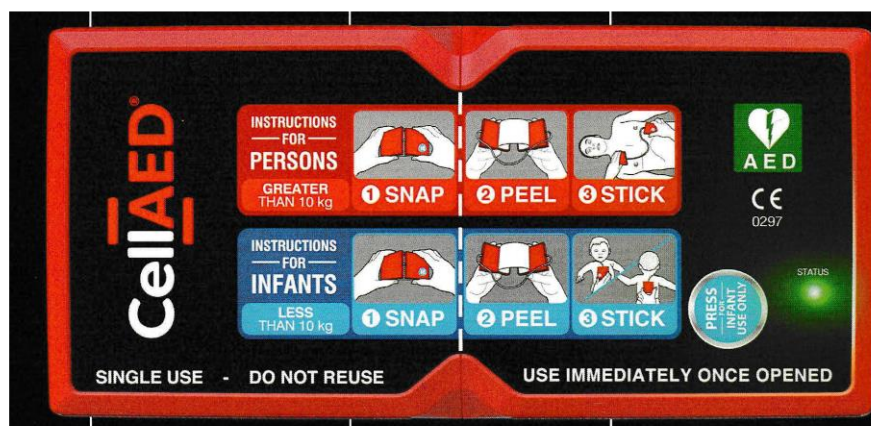
dream fulfilled. As a result pre-ordered units are beginning to be delivered by post. Production will move into full swing as 2023 progresses. John has most generously donated 500 CellaED units to Ambulance Victoria's "Good Sam" (volunteer cardiac response) Team, and 500 units to St John Ambulance, New Zealand.

Congratulations John and team for the wonderful vision and development of this critical lifesaving device. Most of our readers being former paramedics, encourage the purchase of this critical item.

**Details: Hand held \* Dim. 19.6 cm (L) 9.3 cm (W) 1.7cm (D) Weight App. 300 grams. LED \*Voice instructions \* Infant mode \* Simple usage and Storage. \* Shelf life 13 months.**

**Price (A) \$359.00 + postage & Ins. (Option) \$557.00 + \$198.00 P.A. unit replaced with new unit every 12 months (CellAed for life)**

To Order : [www.livcor.com.au](http://www.livcor.com.au) Search for CellaED.



**SNAP**

**PEEL**

**STICK**

***The life you save just might be your loved one, or your own!***

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***SMILE! I lost three fingers off my right hand. I asked the Doctor; "Would I be able to write with this hand?" He said, "Maybe, but you couldn't count on it."***



## *From Where We Have Come – continued.*

In **1915/16**, St John Ambulance divided its function and the **Victorian Civil Ambulance Service (V.C.A.S.)** was formed. **Howard Hansford** was the inaugural chairman.

This new service relied solely on public donations and municipal council financial support as the then State Government refused to subsidise the ambulance service, unlike the state-wide police and fire brigade entities. As a result, by **1916**, the service was insolvent and its closure contemplated, despite transporting 5,600 patients a year and travelling 60,000 miles (approx. 100,000 kms). However, in **1919**, the devastating Spanish flu pandemic, which claimed the lives of tens of millions world-wide, spread to Australia with our national deaths reaching 15,000. This made the Victorian Civil Ambulance Service essential, and with the Public Health Department funding the fight against this epidemic, the ambulance service was expanded significantly to handle the situation during this period. Subsequently, the fledgling Victorian Civil Ambulance Service survived.



In **1919/20**, Victorian Civil Ambulance Service established headquarters in Lonsdale Street, Melbourne, across the road from the Melbourne Hospital. This was also the residence of the V.C.A.S. Secretary, **Harry Osgood-Cannon**. These premises amply provided for administration offices, vehicle garage, workshop and sleeping quarters for ambulance staff. V.C.A.S. headquarters remained at this Lonsdale Street location until 1957.

### *Victorian Civil Ambulance Service - Headquarters Ambulance Station - Circa 1920*

In **1925**, the three remaining horse-drawn ambulances were retired from service and the horse-drawn ambulance era ended. By this time, V.C.A.S. was running eight motor ambulances on three shifts, with a staff of 30 drivers and attendants. By **1928**, the service also had a motorbike and sidecar.

Country services at Yarram, Yarra Junction and Rushworth began. **Frederick Raven (KStJ JP)** was the longest-serving Secretary, then Superintendent/Secretary, of V.C.A.S., appointed Secretary to the Victorian Civil Ambulance Service at Lonsdale Street headquarters in **1930** and Superintendent/Secretary in **1938**, a position he held until 1965. Frederick died in 1967, aged 73. Very stringent employment rules for ambulance personnel applied under Osgood-Cannon, and these were followed under Raven's austere command.

Although bells and warning lights were used in emergency journeys, ambulance drivers were usually promptly dismissed if involved in an accident with another vehicle. Superintendent/Secretary Raven's style of command was not substantially relaxed with the appointment of his successor **Superintendent Michael Jackson** in 1965. Overall, however, Mick Jackson was generally a fair an. Superintendent Jackson died prematurely approximately five years later. Mick Jackson was succeeded by **Mr Gordon Ortmann** as C.E.O. and, in 1973 by **Mr Harold (Jock) Berry**, who held this position for 20 years until 1993. This executive position alternated until the appointment of **Mr Greg Sassella** as C.E.O. of the Metropolitan Ambulance Service in 2001.

Apart from the three early V.C.A.S. country ambulance services at Yarram, Yarra Junction and Rushworth, the remainder of regional Victoria was left largely to provide any form of ambulance transport under its own resources. As early as the 1930s, interest gathered for the commencement of ambulance services in country towns.

**Auxiliaries:** The critical role of fund-raising for ambulance purposes has been mentioned from the outset of the foundation of ambulance in Victoria. Without these fund-raising activities, the outcomes of ambulance development would not have been achieved. In fact, ambulance auxiliaries have remained an important income source throughout the decades and assist to this very day.

Fund-raising activities by the local community and ambulance auxiliaries generally would result in the purchase of an ambulance vehicle for the town and district, operated by voluntary ambulance drivers, with the ongoing operational costs solely offset by ambulance auxiliary fund-raising, shire council funding, donations, and the introduction of a district ambulance subscription scheme. Local country ambulance services throughout Victoria adopted ambulance subscription schemes which yielded a most important source of operational income in the decades of 1940/1950.

Adapted from the book, *Lights Sirens and Challenges*

**To be continued next edition**

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***Is the Black Dog snarling at you?***

***You are not alone.***

***Thankfully the years have taken us past the days when PTSD occurrence was considered weakness and carried a stigma. That era caused many of our emergency services colleagues to hide the symptoms or diagnosis, and in doing so, denied themselves of assistance, at times ending in a tragic result and family grief. Today there are professionals from whom to seek early intervention and assistance.***

***Talk to your GP or another trusted medical professional.***

***Discuss it with a trusted friend. It does help.***

***Phone Lifeline 13 11 14 or Beyond Blue 1300 22 4636.***

***Someone is waiting to help and share your problem.***

***PTSD can be treated if you take the first step.***



**Ambulance  
Victoria**



**New Members – Welcome Professor Tony Walker A.S.M.**



Following Tony Walker's retirement as Ambulance Victoria C.E.O. in December 2022, our committee offered Tony life membership of our museum. To our delight Tony accepted this offer.

In the duration of Tony's time as A.V. C.E.O. he has been a tower of strength behind our organisation. Tony's support and contribution as C.E.O. created the opportunity for the museum to go forward, and to reach today's status. We are proud to have

you aboard Tony, and we will look forward to your company from time-to-time at the museum and events. Ed.

***Also, welcome to Des Jones – Emerald, Jon Edwards – Benalla***

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## ***“They Shall Grow Not Old”***

***“In Flanders fields the poppies blow, between the crosses row on row .....***

“Ambulance Victoria was invited to join other emergency services, defence forces, government agencies and members of the public to lay floral tributes at the Shrine of Remembrance on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> November – Remembrance Day, 2022. AV was represented by Chief of Staff, **Kerryn Douglas** who accompanied **Gavin Freeman**, Deputy Commissioner of Fire Services Victoria and **Shane Patton**, Victoria Police Chief Commissioner laying wreaths on behalf of emergency services at the Shrine. The event was also attended by the Honourable **Linda Dessau** AC, 29<sup>th</sup> Governor of Victoria, Premier, Honourable **Daniel Andrews** MP and Opposition Leader **Matthew Guy**. Bunurong Elder **Mick Edwards** performed a smoking ceremony and offered a Welcome to Country. Attendees included veterans from conflicts in Vietnam, Korea, and the Gulf. All stood for a minute’s silence to pay their respects to more than 102,000 Australians who lost their lives to wars, conflicts, and peacekeeping operations since Federation.”

These brave men and women of our armed forces went forward in times of war to protect the freedom of our Nation. Many made the Supreme Sacrifice defending our country from tyranny and oppression. Others suffered horrific war injuries to be carried for their life’s duration. We must never forget this ultimate sacrifice, it must remain for time immemorial, for generation after generation. We must also hope and pray that our wonderful Nation always remains a free and democratic society. Free and democratic for our children, and their grandchildren. Free to enjoy and carry on the great Australian values and traditions. these have been forged over decades of hardship, trial, and tribulation by those who have gone before us. And pray, that we will never prove unworthy of the precious sacrifice.



***“They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old: Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.***

***At the going down of the sun and in the morning, we will remember them”***

***“Lest We Forget”***



## *A.V. Telegraph* **A.V. News Throughout the State.**

**Daphne Turner: 04/06/1922 - 06/11/2022**

We share the recent passing of 100 year old Daphne Turner with gratitude for her incredible contribution and support to ambulance services in Victoria.

A much admired and respected community leader with boundless enthusiasm, a joyful humour, and an ability to engage with all she came in contact with. Daphne was President of the Angel Op shop committee Rosebud for 17 years which raised many hundreds of thousands of dollars to support Peninsula Ambulance Service Helicopter Ambulance "The Angel of Mercy" Call sign *Angel* or *Alpha Alpha Lima*, a Bell Jet ranger which operated out of Tyabb Airfield.



***Daphne (Centre) with fellow volunteers.***

The Angel operated from 1971 till 1987 and was replaced with the modern MICA Helicopter Ambulance 495 at Essendon Airfield when Peninsula Ambulance Service was amalgamated with Ambulance Service Melbourne in 1987.

During the early days Daphne allowed the "Angel" to land on her property in Rosebud and had flood lighting installed so it could make night landings at the helipad. After the Angel ceased operations in 1987 the Angel Committee continued to raise funds for the local community including purchasing the first Cardiac Monitor Defibrillators for Rosebud Ambulance branch and some of the surrounding branches.

Daphne will be fondly remembered by many and sadly missed.

***Rest In Peace.***



### **Maryborough Aeromedical Transfer Station**

After more than four years of dedicated local fundraising, the Maryborough community have celebrated the official opening of the Maryborough Aeromedical Transfer Station on Friday, 9<sup>th</sup> December 2022.



Transfer stations provide a safe and secure environment where patients are treated and transferred quickly, from road ambulance to emergency aircraft, ahead of transport to specialist hospitals.



***Our Maryborough fund-raising group.***

In a fitting tribute, the facility was dedicated in honour of the late Dianne Mullins, ex-President of the Maryborough Ambulance Auxiliary, who united the community to help raise \$120,000 for the transfer station.

A time capsule was buried on the occasion to be opened in 2122. AV contributed a letter, COVID medallion and matchbox size Sprinter Ambulance to the capsule.

Thank you, Maryborough, for your remarkable generosity.



## Mark Rogers A.S.M.

On Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> November 2022 long-serving paramedic Mark Rogers ASM retired after more than 43 years of dedicated service to the Victorian community.

Mark commenced his ambulance career as a paramedic in 1979 and held various patient-facing, communication, support, and management roles across the decades.

He joined the management team in 2006 as Operations Manager Logistics for the former Metropolitan Ambulance Service.

In 2009 he was appointed General Manager Specialist Service for Ambulance Victoria and Mark was awarded the Ambulance Service Medal (ASM) in January 2012.

He was appointed as the inaugural Chief Operating Officer in 2015.

In August 2021 as part of his transition to retirement Mark took up the role of Executive Director of the newly created Operational Strategy and Integration.

Congratulations on a wonderful career of service and dedication and best wishes for a long, happy, and healthy retirement.

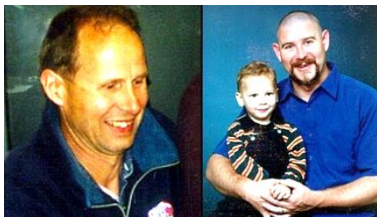


*Mark receiving his presentation from colleagues.*

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## *Remembering .....*

### Robert Bland and Philip Oakley. M.A.S. Healesville.



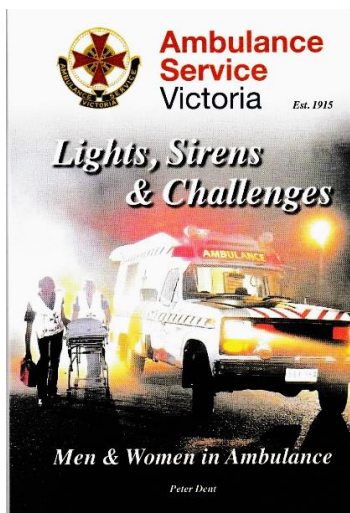
On January 2, 2004, Paramedics Robert Oakley and Phillip Bland were responding to an emergency call out of Healesville. En route their ambulance was involved in an accident, both our colleagues lost their lives. They made the supreme sacrifice caring for the community, this is the ultimate consequence of our profession.



Whether it be 19 years since this tragic accident, or 19 decades, the memories of Rob and Phil will live on in our hearts for as long we, as brothers and sisters, live. Their loved ones also will be often in our thoughts and prayers.

**Rest Peacefully Rob and Phil.**

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## *A great look at our turbulent 1960s/1970s.*

***History. Hands-on Personal Cases. Humour.***

A5 quality, vinyl cover, bound, gloss pages, black/white and colour plates, 100p.p.

An Ambulance History Keepsake

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**Deposit \$19.95 into: Ambulance Historical Society Vic Inc.**

**BSB No: 704-230 Account No: 100**

**In bank reference field insert: LSC and Surname. (Essential)**

## *An Hourglass of Camaraderie*

*Camaraderie between emergency services are as links in a chain. It has stood the test of time, it exists both during and off duty, and has no limitation. Here is an account of that bond standing strong throughout the decades.*

**Rod Knowles** is a retired Leading firefighter. He is also Editor of Retired Firefighters' publication "*The Senior Firefighter*." Rod and I, as Editor of *The Beacon*, have communicated over the past few years exchanging information and articles for each other's editing. One Sunday recently I received a phone call from Rod. Initially, I assumed he was seeking something in line with our publications. This was not the case. Rod explained he, and wife **Jean**, were at a Beechworth caravan park, en-route to Canberra and coming up to Lake Hume to see the open dam gates releasing water due to our excessive seasonal rain fall. Rod and Jean had already been to view the spectacular spilling of Dartmouth Dam, a sight to behold! Rod asked if we would be at home, and that he and Jean would like to visit and meet Barb and I in person. I said that would be a pleasure, and a time was arranged. Rod and his lovely wife Jean arrived at around 1500 hrs. We met, and all sat down for a coffee and a yarn. The high point of this visit was that Rod had joined MFB in 1963, aged 20yrs and I, VCAS in 1965, aged 19yrs so we both had the now diminishing privilege of being able to speak of this era. This indeed was a trip down memory lane. We talked of service employment conditions of the time, notable jobs, old work colleagues, humorous happenings, particular events and much more, a great look back into the past. This conversation also embraced how we worked together, dependent on each other's expertise when in demand, and the complete trust that existed. Accompanying of course were many stories of out of work get-togethers, and "secret men's business"

In an extremely interesting passage of conversation relating to the era of joining, our respective services were raised. Rod, as a 20 year old in the MFB, was rubbing shoulders with firemen who began in the 1920s. So here were the next generation of firefighters, different techniques, different training, different vehicles, just about different everything. However, these men were the "springboard" to his generation of firefighters, and the generation before, the same for them. This is of course being the progression of development of our Emergency Services through decades of learning by experiences, success and failure, trial, and tribulation, continuing to this very day.

In my case joining VCAS in 1965, at 19 years of age I encountered a similar experience. Two Ambulance Officers still remained in that service who will still be remembered by some. **John Campbell and Bill Gibson**. Both men had been with VCAS since the early 1920s. Also, both of them had worked on horse drawn ambulances, and the first Renault motor ambulance. Bill and John were awarded the *British Empire Medal* for service during WW11. They had operated from Lonsdale Street H.Q. Melbourne, 24 hours a day, living in. I worked with Bill on occasions listening to his experiences of that era, precious history today. I also had the privilege of attending John and Bill's farewell at the MCG in 1968, marking 90 years of service between them. What a wonderful experience and honour.

The stand out of Rod and Jean's visit was, however, that from the time they walked in the door, the Emergency Service camaraderie existed, Fiery on Ambo, wife on wife. I am sure Rod and Jean's visit proves the point that this given legacy of our work in Emergency Services never fades.



**Rod and Peter**  
*Ageing links of the chain*





## *A Snapshot of Yesteryear*

### **“Spend A Penny”**



For those who remember, and for others who haven't heard this expression, or may have, but are unaware of the term's origin, **“Spend a Penny”**.

Up until around the 1960s, particularly in CBD Melbourne, pre-decimal currency era, public toilet internal facilities, then located down stairs from road level, were uniquely locked. This grand “revenue-raising” project more often had potential to impact on our ladies in need. A problem not encountered in the Gents facilities (And free!) However, in both gender toilets, to enter a “seated toilet cubicle” required a penny (1 cent) inserted

into the door lock to release it for entry.

The problem was, in times of urgent calls of nature, not all had a ready penny in change, the result of this catastrophic!  
Ed.

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**If you can recall this, you are stacking on the years!**



This is a 1954 Dodge ambulance being re-fuelled at a manual petrol bowser of the time. The glass bowl of the bowser held between half a gallon (2.25ltr) and six gallons (27.0 ltrs), petrol cost four shillings and sixpence (4/6) per gallon or equivalent to 12 cents a litre today. The fuel was pumped from the underground tank with the handle located on the side of the bowser. An overflow vent was pushed up the bowl to the required amount of fuel, then pumped up to that quantity. On reaching this level, excess petrol would overflow back down the tubed vent, then back into the underground fuel tank. The delivery hose was then placed into the customer's car filling point, the vent holding the fuel in the bowl released the fuel, then drained it into the vehicle by gravitation. Only man (or kids) power was needed to operate the bowser. As kids in Walhalla circa 1950s, we were always at these bowsers, supervised by the proprietor. This was a great pass time as I imagine it was at many other places in the country.

*Picture: Roger Vidler*

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### *Words of Wisdom*

*A wise old owl sat on an oak. The more he saw, the less he spoke. The less he spoke the more he heard. Why can't we all be like that old bird?*



## *An Introduction to Deadly Violence*

**HODDLE STREET was not the first!** Victoria cites the state's entrée into the world of 'Terrorist Crime' with three events.

**The Russell Street bombing 1986, the Hoddle Street and Queen Street shootings in 1987.**

Queen Street is held up as *"The day that our state joined the ranks of city violence and murder."* Sadly, this is not the case. That dubious distinction occurred some six years earlier.

In May 1980, as a newly promoted A/O 2, I was feeling pretty pleased with myself. I had entered Ambulance Service Melbourne in September 1979 and, post-AOTC, was placed under the tutelage of SO-1 Ken Clarkson. I may be biased, but Ken was, without a shadow of doubt, the most accomplished Training Officer in the Service (T.O.) A hard and unrelenting taskmaster, and he unleashed everything in his arsenal on me, his first 'official' student. So it was, come the following April I passed my exams with flying colours, an achievement I owe to Ken's focussed and intensive training style.

Having enjoyed my first round of leave, I returned to work in early May full of confidence and energy, and in my hubris, believing there was nothing I could not handle! This was to be tested!

On May 22<sup>nd</sup> I was working an 0700hrs Transport Shift with SO-1 Bob Reeves: another exceptional T.O. from City Branch. We had various transport cases, from private residences to outpatients, and transfers to other hospitals.

Around 0930 we received a 'Signal 9' to attend a "collapse" in North Melbourne. An elderly lady had fallen in her kitchen 3 days earlier and fractured her hip on the slate floor. It was bitterly cold that year and the lady had the added factor of severe hypothermia to add to her critical condition.

I attended to this dear lady with compassion, and, in an endeavour to raise her body temperature, I wrapped extra blankets around myself and crouched down with her, holding her to try and warm her shivering body. As we arrived at RMH, in less than 5 minutes she looked peacefully at me and whispered: "I'm so glad I wasn't alone at the end. Thank you, John," - - - and she was gone! Where was all my knowledge, training, and abilities? Nothing could be done for her, I felt so helpless.

Following this sad passing, the normal "Signal 83" procedure took place, of having the patient 'certified'; and the deceased person transported to the city mortuary, the job complete! It sounds so cold.

1020hrs; Ready to depart the city mortuary, I called in clear of this case to be answered with: *"Ah! Good! City 38. You're all I have free. Case XXX; Time Out: 1020. Supreme Court Complex: enter via Little Collins St. 56 have reported a Code 35 (shooting). Multiple casualties. Sign."*

A domestic case involving a joint \$11,000 shared account had gone badly for the defendant. He shared the account with his brother and when his brother suddenly passed, he had decided his sister-in-law being a 'mere woman' was not entitled to her late husband's share. He had been harassing her to forego her rightful financial legacy. Correctly, anticipating he was in trouble legally, he arrived at the court for the verdict with a concealed .44 Magnum.

Bob Reeves and I arrived as officers from MICA 1 were entering the building. Accompanied with my ambulance kit, I followed them in.

To my right were two victims who were clearly deceased: The gunman had grabbed each man as he passed, pressed the gun to their ear and pulled the trigger. He then turned on the other three victims; one an interpreter named Luke Cuni who was shot just below and behind the right ear with a corresponding exit wound in the same place on the left. Later X-rays showed his Medulla Oblongata peppered with shrapnel.

I attended to this victim along with Phil Haig and his partner, whom I cannot recall working with Phil, and I helped them to set up.



As MICA assumed responsibility for the more intensive treatment, I was directed to Court Room No 12 to attend the last two casualties.

The intended victim had been hit just below the angle of the jaw on the right and the bullet was now lodged just beneath the skin adjacent to the lacrimal duct of her left eye. Phil Haig came in and handed me a laryngoscope and ET Tube and guided me through the procedure of intubation!! The woman was unbelievably fortunate if that's the correct term; later examination showed the bullet had ricocheted off her C-3 Vertebra, punched through the rear of her oropharynx, gone through the soft palate and spent its force just beneath the skin of her medial inferior left orbit.

With her tubed, and entry wound treated, I turned my attention to the final victim, the barrister; surprisingly, it was a lady I was acquainted with. From memory this patient had sustained two bullet wounds to her left forearm: one producing a laceration, the other a shallow "through-and-through"; as NCIS might call it!

The two fatal shooting victims had suffered massive cranial trauma, as would be expected from a point blank range gunshot to the head; the visible evidence of this horrific crime evident with blood and tissue splatter on the floor, wall, and ceiling of the corridor in which they were gunned down. The victims had had no warning of what was about to occur.

Mr. Cuni, an internationally known and respected interpreter who spoke eight languages, had his Medulla Oblongata shredded along with much of the lower Pons. Not surprisingly he passed away approximately 16 hours later. The intended victim, the gunman's former sister-in-law, recovered exceptionally quickly; surgery repaired the minimal damage to her neck, Pharyngeal wall, and soft palate. Her tongue, voice box, carotid arteries and jugulars were untouched as was her eyeball – even the lacrimal duct was undamaged. The case lawyer was simply sutured and allowed to return home.

Setting aside the obvious massive trauma and medical techniques required on this case, every paramedic will be able to relate to the simply horrendous scene, a scene that will never pass from my memory. The bodies in the side passage, the blood loss around both Mr.Cuni, the emotional trauma, of the two ladies, and the general Mayme at the scene.

Added to this was the ongoing fear in all our minds: "Where is the shooter?" We had no idea: had he absconded the moment he fired his last shot? For all we knew he may be somewhere nearby, reloading and "coming back to finish the job" despite the massive police presence!

As it eventuated, Bob Reeves and I didn't transport any patients; an 'Emerg Crew' arrived and transported the lawyer; I believe a second MICA crew transported the intended victim and MICA 1 transported Mr.Cuni.

The two deceased persons were transported by the Coroner Service to the mortuary later in the day.

It wasn't until months later at his trial, held not very far from the site of the shootings, did I find out he had been apprehended about 10 minutes after fleeing by a member of the Corps of Commissionaire. The perpetrator was trying to board a moving tram, still carrying his deadly weapon covered in blood.

***With 3 dead, 2 wounded, the public in shock of this horrific attack, " At 1020hrs On May22, 1980, Melbourne then entered the ranks of worldwide urban terrorism"***

At his trial, the defendant stood up in the dock, and as proceedings began, loudly announced he would hunt down and kill anyone who testified against him!

Bob Reeves and I returned to our vehicle and upon calling 'clear' were asked if we required clean kit and answered in the positive. We returned to H.Q. and drew a new shirt each and promptly got back on the road.

Needless to say, the hubris and feelings of 'invincibility' of this 21-year-old, newly minted AO-2 was quickly and brutally expunged in a single morning. At this point I wish to acknowledge both Bob Reeves and Phil Haig for their support and insight on that day. Phil quickly realised I was overwhelmed as I entered the building and immediately got me started handing him equipment and

setting other items up. It was he who suggested I then take on the wounded ladies in the courtroom, and had Bob assist me, and watch over me. It was also Philip who handed me the ET gear with a simple “*There’s no way Kenny wouldn’t have shown you how to do this*” and then guided me step-by-step in doing so. Thoughtfully afterwards, Bob carefully talked about both cases over the course of the next few days that we were running together. Our discussion without doubt, helped me come to terms with the day of these terrible events. This unofficial counselling made an impression on me and may be the reason I recall the details of that day so vividly.

Thank you AOTC for the training, Ken Clarkson for being the unsurpassed mentor that he was, and to Bob Reeves (RIP) and Phil Haig for their insightful management of a young and very vulnerable officer.

Sadly, this was not to be the last of these deadly acts, 6 years later Russell Street Police Head Quarters was bombed, and the following year gunmen wreaked havoc in both Queen Street and Hoddle Street.

**John Waters; Former Paramedic.  
Ambulance Service Melbourne.**

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## *Workshop Report – Terry Brooks*

Due to the festive period, workshop activities have been quiet so there is only a minimum to report.

The Studebaker has only had a service and just the basics. As it was just prior to Christmas, it was not scheduled for the work really required. The car requires extensive work on the engine. Frank Abela was taking the Studebaker to an event, and it malfunctioned in the first 10 kms so Bill is looking into a programme for it. We have to put it through Scott at AV to have the repairs done as it being a major job, at present we do not have the facilities to do it in-house. So this being the case, the Studebaker has been sidelined for the moment. The F100 is being finished off with the little jobs, and we await the drag link I ordered for the Humber to be delivered to rebuild the vehicle’s front end.

Starting off our 2023 regional events, we have the Hanging Rock display and the Yarra Glen show in February on our calendar, and quite a few volunteers from the crew have put their names down to cover them. After this, the impressive Wangaratta Historic Motor Show and Fly is on April 23, 2023.



During the Christmas, New Year break Gary and I did a day trip to Thomastown for a slap up lunch with museum mate Peter Leek and Max, Pete’s dog. Our trip was to finish the carburettor rebuild on his lovely 1960 Bedford Dormobile, or campervan to us Colonials. The float had developed a leak and, being petrol-filled, refused to rise and shut off the needle and seat causing the engine to be flooded with fuel. Wizard Gary found in his collection of English mystery parts an identical float from a Ford Zephyr that was a perfect fit. – Incredibly good fortune and hoarding!

Happy to say, Mr Leek and Max are now able to venture out into the blue yonder.  
**Terry.**

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All of us within the “Museum Family” wonder if these two “Good Samaritans”, *Gary Dole and Terry Brooks* ever stop helping others?

These two blokes put in countless hours at, and for, the museum. Both are active on our AHSV committee, workshop activities, vehicle organisation, and vintage ambulance filming in all weather and hours. This pair also travel away to regional events, more often paying their own accommodation expenses. Gary and Terry demonstrate the true spirit of volunteering and reach far beyond this parameter. They are a priceless asset to our busy and developing organisation. It seems despite these efforts there is nothing they leave outstanding on their active schedule.

## 2022 End of Year Luncheon.

On Monday December 4, 2022, twenty one of our active volunteers and partners gathered at our museum for an end of year get together. **Ralph** and **Chris Casey** organised the catering. Ralph and Chris also set up on Sunday prior for the function. **Rose Brooks** provided a lovely chocolate cake and **Marg Martin** two of her famous pavlovas. Everyone was looking forward to a slice of Marg's treat, however **Gary D.** eyed them off first, "end of story" (and pavs!) Ralph arranged a cake fittingly decorated with **John Clancy's** "true love" our Ford Fairlane vintage ambulance. John balked when requested to put the knife through his treasured Fairlane for serving up. COS, **Kerryn Douglas** exercised her surgical skills for this evil task, while John looked on in horror. This luncheon was a typical Museum family event and hailed as a great 2-3 hour get together. Thanks to all who attended, and special thanks to Ralph and Chris for their efforts prior to, at, and after the luncheon. This brings to an end a turbulent and sad year where our dedicated volunteers have shone out. Unfortunately, Barb and I were unable to make it due to a long awaited surgical appointment in Albury that fell at this particular time.



*The Evil Deed.*



*The Contentment.*



*The Evidence.*



Ambulance  
Victoria

Chas Martin O.A.M.

Museum

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DONCASTER AND TEMPLESTOWE NEWS August 18, 1993

**NEWS watch**

## Boost for service

**T**HE Metropolitan Ambulance Service (MAS) has returned control of 19 of its ambulances to the Doncaster headquarters after response problems.

Senior Constable John McDonald, 27, was found unconscious by his family at his Macleod home on August 2.

An ambulance was called but by the time it arrived, about 20 minutes later, Mr McDonald was dead.

The service has conceded that the transfer of the ambulances to Frankston last month and a communications breakdown contributed to the delay.

MAS spokesman David Collyer said the service acknowledged the delay resulted from the decentralising of the service.

Although denying response problems had resulted from budget cuts, the Health Minister, Mrs Marie Tehan, has asked for equipment upgrading at Doncaster to be expedited.

Mr Collyer said the new equipment would be installed before Christmas.

It includes an automatic vehicle-location system which uses a satellite and radio transmitters.

"Mrs Tehan is urging us to reduce the time frame," he said.

The Computer Aided Dispatch system will also be upgraded.

Assistant secretary of the Ambulance Employees Association, David Land, said in April this year the best response time was 9.8 minutes, and by June, it had increased to 10.05 minutes.

On a normal work day, an ambulance reached 90 per cent of all cases within 17 minutes.

"This is not good enough. We should be able to reach 90 per cent of cases within 10 minutes," he said.

"If a crew had reached this man within 10 minutes there would have

been a greater chance of resuscitating him."

He said the association had warned the service about changing the system until adequate technology was introduced.

"If we are not providing an adequate service now how are we going to cope with further cut-backs? We need to have quality assurance," Mr Lnd said.

He said the government appointed an administrator earlier this year with plans to cut \$10 million to the service's \$55-million budget and sack up to 300 staff.

"It is very frustrating for ambulance officers when they know there is the ability and technology to make it a very efficient service," he said.

"They are the ones who have to explain to the family their relative has died, not the government.

"It is not worth saving a few dollars at the risk of human lives."

■ BY LEANNE SCOTT and NICOLE WYNNE



**THE ambulance control room at headquarters in Doncaster will soon be upgraded.**

## A matter of life and death

**T**HE deaths last week of an eight-year-old boy and a 29-year-old woman from asthma, apparently after ambulance delays, have underlined the case for a public inquiry into the service, made by 'The Age' in February after five earlier deaths.

The service has been buffeted by many changes: a 10 per cent State Government budget cut (over two years), the loss of nearly 100 operational staff who resigned or took redundancy, the resignation and replacement of its chief executive officer and the introduction of private operators. A 1992 recommendation by the coroner to extend the availability of paramedical care by rostering mobile intensive care ambulance (MICA) staff with general ambulance officers, is being implemented. But this change is opposed by the Ambulance Employees Association, which says that 40 patients a day are subjected to life-threatening delays

caused by lack of resources, and that the MICA changes would further erode the service. The Health Minister, Mrs Tehan, accuses the union of "shroud waving" and says ambulances reach patients within 16 minutes in 95 per cent of cases and in 9.5 minutes on average. The union says ambulances take more than 10 minutes to reach most of their patients and more than 20 minutes in some situations.

To the public, the claims and counterclaims sound like a deadly game of political football. The question of response time will influence decisions parents make about whether to drive a child stricken with asthma to hospital or to call an ambulance. It is time for the Premier, Mr Kennett, to appoint an umpire to decide the facts and whether the service has serious problems. Then both sides should accept the umpire's decision, and Mr Kennett should act on it.



10 — THE AGE THURSDAY 27 MAY 1993

# Fears over plan to move MICA staff

By JO CHANDLER,  
medical reporter

Mobile intensive-care ambulance officers resolved yesterday to fight plans by the Metropolitan Ambulance Service's new administrator to disperse highly trained MICA crew officers around Melbourne.

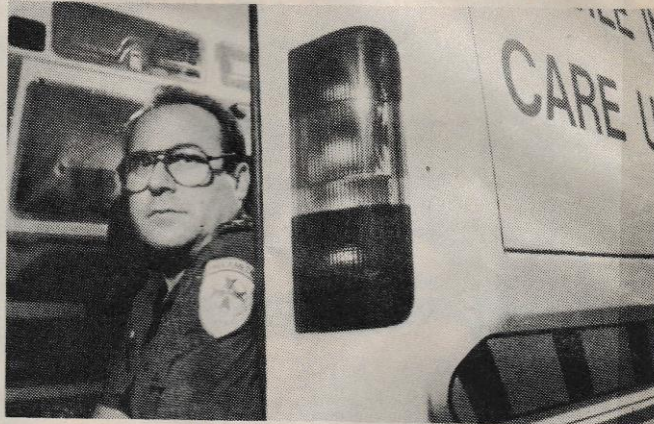
The Ambulance Employees Association said the plan would dismantle the 21-year-old MICA units, effectively ending the capability for intensive care.

An association spokesman, Mr David Land, said that while the plan — which would put MICA trained officers in emergency response units at almost every metropolitan station — might increase the availability of paramedic standard treatment, it would reduce the effectiveness of intensive-care procedures.

Mr Land said that in emergencies, the full resources and training of both members of a MICA team were often in demand. To split the teams would decrease their speed and professional skills, he said.

At present there are about 100 MICA trained officers in Victoria. They crew eight specialist MICA units, most of which are attached to major hospitals. Under current ambulance procedures, MICA units are sent to emergency situations to back up regular road crews.

The MAS administrator, Mr Jack Firman, has proposed increasing the availability of the MICA skills at emergencies and reducing duplicated responses by splitting the traditional two-officer MICA crews.



Mr Masci: plan offers a stark choice.

Under the new plan, MICA officers would team with officers with standard qualifications to crew paramedic emergency vehicles, which would be sent as first-response vehicles.

This would mean that a MICA trained officer would be on board paramedic emergency vehicles operating from most of the 40 city and suburban stations.

But Mr Land said the union and MICA officers rejected the plan because it would erode the quality of ambulance service. He said two-member MICA crews were an integral part of intensive-care response.

Mr Firman was unavailable for comment yesterday.

Mr Kevin Masci, a MICA officer of seven years' experience, said after yesterday's meeting that the plan offered a stark choice to Victorians.

"In nine out of 10 situations, (the split crews) would probably be all right; it's in that one-in-10 situation that you need two fully trained MICA officers on the job," Mr Masci said.

"The question really is how important we think it is that our crews be able to save that one person in 10; are we prepared to accept a degraded overall level of care?"

Only MICA trained officers are qualified to carry out "invasive" procedures such as administering drugs intravenously and putting tubes down airways.

Having only one qualified officer present could cost time that the patient did not have, Mr Masci said.

## Ambulance link lost, claim

RADIO contact between Melbourne's main ambulance control room and on-road ambulances went off air for a short time on Thursday, it was said yesterday.

The Ambulance Employees Association said a faulty voice switch meant control room operators could not contact ambulances on the road by radio for 30 minutes from 10pm to 10.30pm.

Assistant secretary Dave Land said there were quite a few emergencies on then.

A controller involved, who would not be named for fear of being sacked, verified it had dropped out for at least 10 minutes and an emergency had happened.

But Mr Land said controllers did not know it had gone off for some time. He said one mobile intensive care ambulance was paged on a Telecom pager which crews carry

as well as radios. The crew tried for 25 minutes to radio base to find out where the emergency was.

"Cars were calling in from all over trying to find what to do and where to go," Mr Land said.

Metropolitan Ambulance Service spokesman David Collyer said it was simply an allegation and the service did not go off air.

"There's no proof at all it happened and I've spoken to the communications manager, technical services manager and duty officer who all say it didn't happen," he said.

"No fault has been logged at all by the duty officer and if we did go off air it would have been logged. It would have been a very serious thing — technical services people would have been paged to come in and repair it."

Mr Land said it had gone off air

two years ago and three reports from consultants had recommended replacing the computer controlled switch for \$250,000 because it was faulty.

In a separate incident on Thursday, he said three emergencies happened in Werribee about 4pm.

Mr Land said two local ambulances attended but for the third, an asthma attack, three transport cars in the area were not called because transport and emergency calls were on different channels.

Instead, a helicopter costing \$2000 an hour was called.

Mr Collyer said it was legitimate and proper to use the chopper for emergencies such as chronic asthmatics who needed to get to hospital quickly.

— HELEN CARTER



Jack Firman



## *Farewell*

**Ronald Herbert Forth 16/04/1939 --- 27/10/2022**

**Ron Forth** was born in Melbourne and grew up in the Metropolitan area. Since early childhood Ron had a love of cars, trucks, and most anything on wheels with an engine. In Ron's life time he had over 100 cars and was a self-taught mechanic.



Naturally, this passion for cars was fulfilled in Ron's working life as a driver. He drove trucks, cars, and even worked as a chauffeur at a leading city hotel. Prior to, then in retirement, Ron was attracted to vintage vehicles, the first of these a 1926 Chevrolet. Wife **Lorraine** tells us that Ron had an array of these cars. However, the last vehicle purchased was Ron's pride and joy; the vehicle being a **1964 Series IV Humber Super Snipe Ambulance**. This vehicle originated from the *Latrobe Valley Ambulance Service (LVAS)*, and was stationed at Warragul, 1964-1972, known as unit 11. Ron obtained the Humber from a private vendor. The vehicle was in a paddock, used prior as an auto electrician's work vehicle. Seven other derelict Humber vehicles were purchased for parts, then disposed of, to complete Ron's restoration of the Humber ambulance, a project spanning many years. He was the proud owner of his treasured Humber Super snipe for well over three decades.

When the **Ambulance Victoria Chas Martin OAM Museum** moved to new premises at Bayswater from Thomas Town in 2014, Ron quickly came on board. Befriending our late Curator **Chas Martin O.A.M.** Ron would come to the museum in his Humber Super Snipe ambulance and assist with maintenance and repairs to the growing museum vintage ambulance fleet. When regional display events commenced, Ron was right into this activity. The distance to attending some regional events could be more than 300 kms away. Despite being offered reimbursement for fuel, Ron rejected this offer and paid for his own fuel. His faithful "*Patient/nurse mannequin Sue*" always accompanied him on the ambulance stretcher. On one occasion, while travelling to a "Show and Shine" event at Euroa, to Ron's dismay he collided with a big kangaroo, and sustained damage to the ambulance mudguard. Thankfully, he and "Sue" were not injured, and he continued on to his destination at Euroa. Early in 2022 Ron suffered a reoccurrence of a serious medical condition. Over the ensuing months he was hospitalised on a number of occasions. The last admission was a private hospital at Pakenham, it was here his health deteriorated suddenly, and sadly Ron passed away on October 27, 2022.

Prior to Ron's passing, our museum purchased his Humber Super Snipe vintage ambulance. To the delight of Ron's wife Lorraine, family, and friends, **Terry Brooks** organised the Humber to be displayed at Ron's funeral service and partake in a cortege to the cemetery. Ron was a very keen and contributing member of our museum. He was liked and respected by the band of volunteers, both within and at regional events. Our sincere sympathy to wife Lorraine and Ron's extended family.

**Farewell Ron, you will be missed, rest in peace our dear friend.**



***Ron's pride and joy Humber Ambulance.***



## *A Gentle Journey of Nature*

Sometime ago I travelled to my beloved mountains and camped on the bank of a beautiful small mountain river, canopied with large trees.

I was saddened at the time as I had just lost an aging friend, who had passed away unexpectedly.

Sitting on the bank of this pristine river, its crystal clear water rippling sleepily over its bed of subtle coloured rocks, stones, and an occasional log. I sat in thought of my friend, and also at this time, taking in the abundant miracles of nature before me. My eyes fixed on an old elm tree on the opposite bank, it was adorned with its Autumn colours. In a gentle breeze, every now and then, an Autumn leaf would fall from a branch of this tree and softly land into this mountain stream. The crystal waters of the river would cradle these fallen Autumn leaves and gently carry them away. The current took the leaf over rocks and through shaded pools, the rays of sunshine through the trees highlighting its journey. I would watch this inspiring event until the leaf was carried around the river bend out of sight.

It may have been due to my emotions at this time, but I connected this happening with a process of nature in life, and passing, with symbolism.

*The Autumn leaves being a symbol of aging.*

*The leaf falling softly into the stream, a symbol of passing.*

*The water carrying the leaf away, symbolising the beginning of a new journey.*

I thought I would put this observation into brief words.

***“Does not the Autumn leaf falling gently into the mountain stream begin a new journey?”***

*Peter Dent*

~~~~~

## *The Amba Sense of Humour.*

Prior to the introduction of tertiary Paramedic qualification M.U.C.A.P.S. in 1999, training was achieved in the following manner. A new recruit would be placed under the guidance of a senior Paramedic, in most cases a qualified Station Office Grade 2. This training was immediately on the road “Hands On” supported by in-house theory sessions. A recruit had to pass the In-house course and then attend AOTC and pass compulsory A/O Grade 2 status. Failure to pass either of these qualifications resulted in termination of employment.

This training method at times resulted in some most unusual situations, both serious and humorous. The S/O was unfortunately responsible for his charge’s actions and behaviour and so on. Even given that an applicant could present at interview with great potential, it was not uncommon early stages in this profession for this new member attending his first or second “Bad one” never to be seen again. Uniforms and gear were normally posted back or delivered to Latrobe Street H.Q., this usually occurred sometime after the disappearance of the budding Paramedic. Circa 1970s, one S/O colleague was in this training phase with a new recruit, and through experience, generally it could be ascertained as to whether the new member would make the grade or not. In this fellow’s case it was to the negative, apparently after several embarrassing, nerve wracking, near disaster incidents. On one particular shift my colleague and his recruit returned to H.Q. to finish duty. Due to this being a time of shift changes etc. there were 4 or 5 crews in the H.Q. mess room. The recruit had noted at the wash bay rear H.Q. garaging (I, and others may remember these) 2 rings about 5-6 ft apart, at head height, fixed to the bay wall. Sitting in the fairly well occupied mess room, the recruit asked a member their purpose. This officer happened to be a real stirrer and replied to him; *“Well our administration here is very old fashioned and austere, and if you make too many mistakes, they tie your wrists to them and flog you mercilessly”* The look on the new chum’s face of horror brought a roar of laughter throughout the mess. To my mate’s delight his charge never reported for shift next morning and was never seen again! fulfilling the inevitable. Amen!





# AMBULANCES 'IN CRISIS'



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Marie T

HERALD/SUN  
25.1.94

## Ambulances 'in crisis'

FROM Page 1

A copy of the letter has been given to the *Herald Sun*.

Written by the association's secretary Mr John Taplin, it says the situation is extremely critical on public holidays.

Using Christmas Day as an example, Mr Taplin told Ms Tehan of a MICA officer being sent to emergencies in a station wagon with no ambulance or crew as back-up.

At 5pm on Christmas Day there were delays up to 39 minutes for emergency calls.

Mr Taplin said the same could happen tomorrow on the Australia Day holiday.

Mr Taplin told Ms Tehan the government's restructuring had halved the number of ambulances with two-person crews available for emergencies.

He said that at 3pm on any week day before restructuring there were 105 two-person crews and vehicles available. Today there were 54 such crews.

Mr Taplin said today he was disturbed the leaking

On Christmas Day we were dangerously short of resources. The Duty Officer logged that emergency calls were exceeding maximums covering the Clinical Support Officers (a single MICA Officer in a station wagon) were being sent to emergency cases without an ambulance and crew available to back up - so further resources were available and there were up to thirty nine minute delays in emergencies. This was at 5:00pm on Christmas Day.

The Metropolitan Ambulance Service have agreed with me that Christmas Day was a bad day and they were considerably under resourced. But such incidents are not confined to just one day. Constantly the Communications staff simply run out of available resources to meet the workload. The Duty Officers logs confirm what my members are reporting to me.

Excerpt: Part of the letter sent to Mrs Marie Tehan

of his letter could politicise the issue.

"I don't want it becoming a political issue when it is a life-and-death issue," he said.

"In an emergency the response time should be under eight minutes for 90 per cent of calls, but ours is 16 minutes, which means 10 per cent of emergency calls are waiting more than 16 minutes.

"The well-being of patients is suffering and people are dying because of these problems, but we can't quantify the numbers," Mr Taplin said.

"Our people just know when they get to a job that they could have done much better for the patient if we had the resources we need.

"MICA units are being used for straightforward transport jobs, but half

way through they (the crew) hear a call for a full heart attack and there is nothing they can do."

He said it was also a daily occurrence for a police officer or firefighter to drive an ambulance to hospital because the one-man crew-member had to treat a patient on board.

Mr Taplin is worried about the service coping if bushfires break out.

He said large rural centres such as Sale and Bairnsdale were without ambulance coverage for hours at a time.

"If we had bushfires like those in NSW we would not be able to evacuate hospitals and nursing homes because we don't have buses."

Ms Tehan's spokesman, James Tonkin, said the letter was long and was still being looked at.

## Union warns Tehan

By MIKE EDMONDS

SLOW response times and rock-bottom morale have created a crisis in Victoria's ambulance service, according to its union.

The union has written to the Health Minister, Ms Marie Tehan, warning of:

**OFFICERS'** complaints that morale has never been so low.

**RESPONSE** times for 90 per cent of emergencies are 16 minutes, double the recommended time, with the remaining 10 per cent taking even longer to attend.

**STUDENT** officers rostered together to crew emergency response vehicles.

**STUDENTS** working mobile intensive care ambulances (MICA) without supervision.

**AMBULANCE** service managers responding to emergency calls in sedans and station wagons.

**A DANGEROUS** shortage of ambulances and crews on public holidays.

According to the Ambulance Employees Association, the service is in chaos and patients' lives are in danger.

The association has had no response to a letter outlining its concerns it sent to Ms Tehan almost a fortnight ago.

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Ambulance  
Victoria

Chas Martin O.A.M.  
Museum