A very short history

of the Order of St John

(emphasising its Australian history)



by

Ian Howie-Willis

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Priory in Australia
The Order of St John

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AUTHOR'S DEDICATION

Dedicated to the young people comprising the membership of the Cadet movement of St John Ambulance Australia and to the officers who lead them.

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PREFACE

This booklet is an introduction to the history of the Order of St John and its major outgrowth, St John Ambulance.

Its intended audience includes:

- people generally interested in how St John Ambulance grew from the Order
- people from outside the organisation who have a need to understand its origins, traditions and organisational structure
- new St John Ambulance members wanting further information about the organisation they have joined
- leaders within the Cadet branch of St John Ambulance wanting historical background on the Order
- Cadets working towards the "Knowledge of the Order" proficiency badge, and
- other Cadets who wish to understand better how St John Ambulance works .

While the Order traces its history back to the crusades of the mediaeval era, the St John Ambulance movement developed in Britain during the 1870s and 80s. The booklet deals with these episodes but the focus is on the 130-year history of St John Ambulance in Australia.

The booklet doesn't pretend to be a complete history of the Order or the various branches of St John Ambulance Australia. Instead it is both an introduction and a resource. Its last section consists of a list of 'Further Reading' materials. The list contains items that are generally of recent origin and easy to obtain. The list is also a guide to readers wanting to do further research on particular topics.

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June 2004

1. Introduction

The full name of the Order of St John is "The Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem". In Australia most people are more used to its "public name", St John Ambulance Australia. The Order is an ecumenically Christian organisation. That is, it has Christian values but accepts members from many different Christian churches while also admitting members of other faiths, for example Buddhists, Hindus, Jews and Muslims.

The Order's main interests are community welfare and health, especially first aid to the injured. It began specialising in first aid during the 1870s and 80s, at first by teaching public classes, later by providing first aid services at public events.

The Order formed in England in 1831. Its founders believed they were reviving the English branch of the ancient Knights of St John which had been closed down during England's religious reformation in the mid-sixteenth century. Also called the Knights Hospitaller, these knights belonged to a military order of monks that had fought between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries to secure the Holy Land (present-day Palestine and Israel) for Christianity. As well as fighting for their faith, the Hospitallers had always provided aid to the sick and suffering regardless of race or religion. The modern Order keeps alive this tradition through St John Ambulance.

2. More than one Order of St John

There are many Orders of St John, but only some are "recognised Orders". There are five recognised Orders, as follows:

(i) The Sovereign Military and Hospitaller Order of St John of Jerusalem, also commonly called the Sovereign Military order of Malta, a Catholic Order which is the most direct modern descendant of the ancient Hospitallers.

(ii) The Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem, our own Order, sometimes inaccurately described as the "British Order of St John", which is ecumenical, that is Christian but independent of any particular church.

In addition to these two there are the *Johanniterorden* (German: 'St John Orders'), which are Protestant Orders, mainly Lutheran and Reformed Church. There are seven main branches of the *Johanniterorden* family, the three main ones being:

(iii) *Die Balley Brandenburg des ritterlichen Ordens Sankt Johannis vom Spital zu Jerusalem* (German: "The Bailiwick of Brandenburg of the Order of the Knights of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem"), a mainly German Order.

(iv) *Johanniter Orde in Nederland*, the Order of St John in the Netherlands.

(v) *Johanniterorden I Sverige*, the Order of St John in Sweden.

These Orders have signed pacts with each other recognising each other's rights to call themselves Orders of St John. They also enjoy some degree of official government recognition in the nations where they are established. The agreements between them are based on their historical links with the ancient Order and their maintenance of the ancient Hospitallers' tradition of charitable community service.

As well as the five recognised Orders there are several dozen others, mainly small and of recent origin, who claim descent from the ancient Hospitallers. The five recognised Orders of St John call these ones the "unrecognised" orders. They do not accept the right of this group to call themselves Orders of St John because their links with the ancient Hospitallers are obscure and they generally do little charitable work.

3. Origins of the ancient Order of Knights Hospitaller

The recognised Orders of St John trace their origins to a hospice in Jerusalem in the late eleventh century. Benedictine monks from an abbey next to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre ran the hospice for poor and ill pilgrims who were visiting the city's sacred sites. About the year 1080 a monk called Gerard, thought to have been either French or Italian, took charge of the hospice.

Under Gerard the hospice survived the persecution that Christians in the Holy Land were then suffering under their Turkish, Muslim rulers. The hostility of the rulers to Christianity eventually prompted Pope Urban II to call on the Christian nations of western Europe, which were then entirely Catholic, to conduct a crusade to secure the Holy Land for Christianity. People of all classes — kings, nobles, knights, tradespeople and peasants — answered the Pope's call. A great army assembled and set out for the Holy Land via Constantinople (present-day Istanbul) in 1096. It reached Jerusalem in June 1099. After a six-week siege, the crusaders succeeded in capturing the city amidst great bloodshed on 15th July.

Being Catholics, Brother Gerard's monks received favoured treatment from the crusaders who now ruled Jerusalem. For example, following the city's capture they were granted the occupancy of the local Greek Orthodox monastery of St John the Baptist. They adopted St John as their patron saint. From then on their hospice became known as "the hospital of St John of Jerusalem".

Crusaders returning to Europe carried home news of the good works of Gerard's monks among the city's poor and ill. The monks soon began receiving gifts of money and land from grateful returned crusaders and pilgrims. Within a few decades they owned estates in places as far apart as Poland and Portugal and Scotland and Italy.

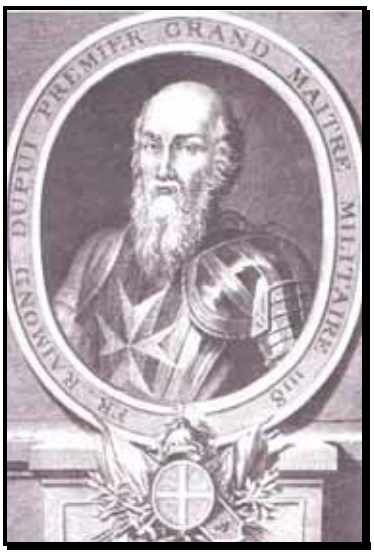


The Blessed Gerard, founding head of the ancient Order of St John.

As Gerard's monks became wealthier and more influential, they wished to become independent of the Benedictine Order. They petitioned Pope Paschal II (Urban II's successor) to grant them separate status. Paschal granted their wish on 15 February 1113 by issuing a Bull (official papal commandment) to establish them as a new monastic order under the name "Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem". Gerard became rector or head of the new Order, whose members soon became known as "Hospitallers". He died five years later in 1118 aged about 80. After his death his monks successfully sought to have him beatified, that is given the title "the Blessed" — the first step on to way to sainthood. By this time the Hospitallers were running hospices for the poor and ill in France and Italy as well as Jerusalem; and within several years their charitable work had spread to most other nations of western Europe.

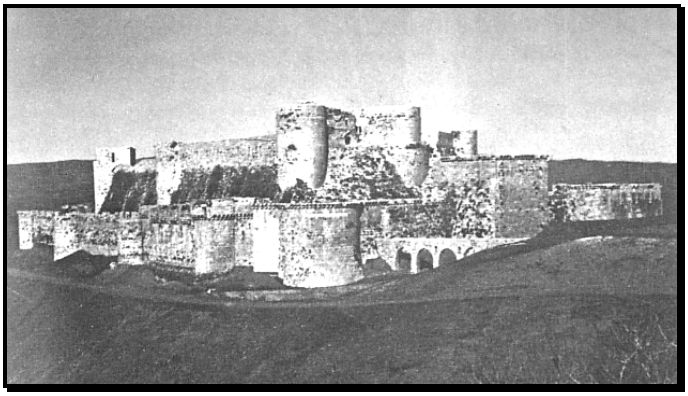
4. The Holy Land, Rhodes and Malta

Gerard's successor as head of the Hospitallers was Raymond du Puy, a French nobleman aged about 40 who took the title of "Master" of the Order. Under Raymond the Hospitallers took on a military function as well as their charitable role. The reason was that every able-bodied male citizen of the crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem was needed to help defend the kingdom against Muslim armies determined to recapture the Holy Land for Islam. Soon after Raymond became Master some of them helped defend Antioch in 1119.



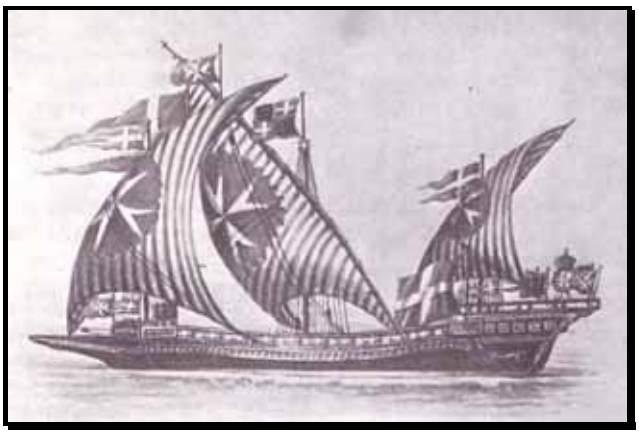
Raymond du Puy, who succeeded the Blessed Gerard as head of the ancient Order of St John, became its first Grand Master and gave the Order a military role.

With the Templars, another similar order of military monks, the Hospitallers quickly became the backbone of the crusader armies in the Holy Land. Together these two great military orders fought all the main battles of the crusades until the victory of the Muslims over the crusaders in the battle for the coastal city of Acre (present-day Akko in northern Israel) in 1291. In the meantime the Templars and Hospitallers had built the huge fortresses or "crusader castles", the ruins of which still remain in present-day Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine and Syria.



The crusader castle Krak-des-Chevalliers, a great fortress of the Knights Hospitallers, nowadays in Syria just north of the border with Lebanon.

After the fall of Acre the Hospitallers withdrew to Cyprus, where they had a commandery. Wanting an island of their own, in 1306 they invaded the island of Rhodes, which they eventually conquered. Here they erected buildings like those they had left behind in the Holy Land — fortresses, a grand hospital, Master's palace, churches and accommodation for the knights. They also developed port facilities, for they now became a naval as well as a military power. They controlled Rhodes for 216 years. In 1480 they fought off a mighty army sent against them by the Ottoman (Turkish) emperor, Mohammed II. In 1523, however, a second Ottoman army sent by his grandson, Suleiman the Magnificent, expelled them from Rhodes.



The galley of the Grand Master of the Knights of Malta, late eighteenth century.

After the loss of Rhodes, the Holy Roman (Austrian) Emperor, Charles V, granted the Hospitallers the islands of Malta, which they occupied in 1530. Malta was to remain their base for the next 268 years. In that time they became known as "the Knights of Malta". As on Rhodes, they constructed many buildings for carrying out their military, religious and charitable functions; and yet again these included fortresses, cathedral, hospital, palace, accommodation and port facilities.



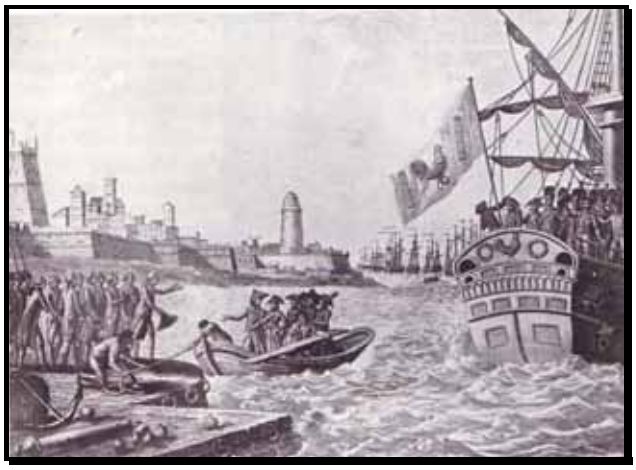
The Knights of St John minister to patients in the Great Ward of their Sacred Infirmary (hospital) at Valetta, Malta; from a woodcut of 1584.

Meanwhile in 1565 the Knights had to withstand a prolonged siege by an Ottoman armada of 80,000 men aboard about 200 vessels sent against them by Suleiman the Magnificent. Now an old man of 70, he still thought they were a threat to his power. To defend Malta, the Grand Master of the Order, John de la Valette, had only 9000 troops, the majority of whom were hurriedly recruited local Maltese. The siege lasted throughout four months of fierce fighting. Eventually, after losing 30,000 troops, the armada withdrew. By this time the Grand Master's own troops had been reduced to a mere 600. The Knights' staunch defence of Malta made them the heroes of Europe. They had won not only a great victory for their Order but also for the Christian faith. Even though western Europe was now bitterly divided between Catholics and Protestants, both sides applauded the Knights' victory against Suleiman's army.



The former palace of the Grand Masters of the Order of St John, Malta: the upper floor main entrance (photograph by Miller Distributors Limited, Luqa Malta).

The Knights retained Malta until 1798, when a French fleet under Napoleon Bonaparte captured the island then expelled them. Napoleon had strategic reasons for wanting to control Malta. He feared that if France's enemies, who included Britain, Russia, Spain, Austria and Prussia, got there first France would be vulnerable to attack from the Mediterranean. Driven from Malta, the Knights scattered. They later regrouped in Sicily and eventually established permanent headquarters in Rome in 1834, but without territory of their own or a military function. Rome remains their headquarters. Now formally known as "The Sovereign Military and Hospitaller Order of St John of Jerusalem, called of Rhodes, called of Malta", they confine their activities to their religious duties and their charitable works.



Napoleon Bonaparte lands at Valetta, Malta, 12 June 1798, to be greeted by his supporters within the Order of St John.

5. Emblems and Mottoes

About the time that Gerard joined the hospice, he and his fellow monks had begun wearing an eight-pointed white cross on the left breast of their habits. Now commonly called the "Maltese Cross" or the "St John Cross", this cross was the emblem of the city of Amalfi, near Naples in southern Italy. Merchants from Amalfi had financially supported the hospice, so perhaps the Hospitallers adopted the cross of Amalfi to show their gratitude. The origins of this kind of cross are uncertain. One suggestion is that it began as four arrowheads with the tips placed together.

The eight-pointed cross had deep meaning for the ancient Hospitallers. They believed that its whiteness symbolised the purity of soul necessary for defenders of Christianity while the four main arms signified the Christian virtues of prudence, justice, temperance and fortitude. Similarly, they believed the eight points represented the "beatitudes" or behaviours that are blessed in God's sight. Jesus had spelt these out in his famous "Sermon on the Mount" (found in the Bible in the Gospel of Matthew, Chapter 5, verses 5–12): suffering poverty; giving comfort; being meek; seeking righteousness; being merciful; being pure in spirit; being a peace-maker; and suffering persecution for a rightful cause.

Many centuries later, after St John Ambulance became established during the late nineteenth century, the eight points of the cross were said to represent the necessary qualities of the effective first aider. These are tact, resourcefulness, dexterity, sympathy, perseverance, discrimination, explicitness and observation. Early editions of *First Aid to the Injured*, the St John Ambulance first aid manual, used to include this diagram setting out the eight qualities.



The Badge of the Order with each point of the cross representing a necessary first aider's quality.

As the above diagram indicates, our modern Order has also added two lions and two unicorns in the angles between the main arms of the cross. Called "the Queen's Beasts", these indicate that The Most Venerable Order, that is our Order, is a royal order of chivalry. This means that, as with other royal orders (for instance, the Order of Australia, the Order of the British Empire etc), the Order may grant awards for distinguished community service in the Queen's name.



The Standard of the Priory in Australia.

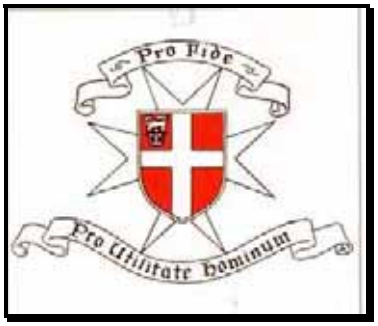
Our modern Order refers to its eight-pointed cross with "Queen's Beasts" as its "Badge", but the Badge is only the more familiar of the two principal emblems that it uses. The other is its "Arms", or heraldic shield. The Arms consists of a plain silver or white "Crucifixion" or "Latin" cross on a red shield. The silver/white cross on red background is known as the "Cross of St John the Baptist", and is named after the patron saint of all the Orders of St John. The Most Venerable Order includes the royal heraldic crest of a lion above a crown in the top left quarter of the shield, again indicating that the Order is one of the royal orders of chivalry.

In Australia the Arms of the Order are most commonly seen on the "Standard" or banner of St John Ambulance Australia, which is shown in this diagram. The blue disk or roundel with the Southern Cross constellation at the centre indicates that the Standard belongs to the Australian Priory or branch of The Most Venerable Order.

Like the Badge, the Arms of the Order derive from the emblems of the ancient Order of St John. Because the Hospitallers had chosen St John the Baptist as their patron saint, they displayed his cross

on their banners and other items of regalia. All modern Orders of St John continue this practice. Some, our own Order included, use both Badge and Arms in combination, often with the Arms superimposed over the Badge, as illustrated below.

The modern Orders of St John also use two other important symbols of the Hospitallers. These are the two Latin mottoes of the ancient Order: *Pro fide* ("For the faith") and *Pro utilitate hominum* ("For the service of mankind"). For monks and knights recruited from the many nations of Catholic Europe, Latin was the common language in the mediaeval era (Middle Ages). It was the language of the law, education, commerce and religion; and so it was the language of the Order as well.



The Arms, Badge and Mottoes of the Order

The first of the mottoes, *Pro fide*, indicated that the Hospitallers' primary duty was to promote and defend Christianity. The second, *Pro utilitate hominum*, emphasised the other reason for the Order's existence, which was charitable. The ancient Hospitaller used to refer to those they helped as "Our lords, the sick; and our lords, the poor". Giving aid to the needy and treating the ill were always basic responsibilities for the Hospitallers, and so they carried out their charitable works wherever they were, in the Holy Land, on Rhodes and Malta, and in their priories and commanderies in Europe.

For the modern Orders of St John, as for the ancient Knights Hospitaller, the two Latin mottoes, the eight-pointed St John cross and the shield of St John the Baptist continue to be deeply significant symbols. On the one hand they stand for the members' commitment to Christian values; on the other hand they represent the importance of practical service to suffering humanity.

6. The Ancient Order in Britain and Ireland

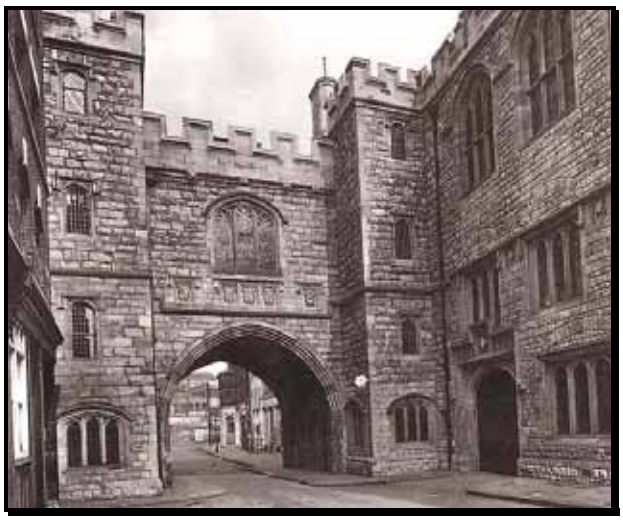
In the decades after the Hospitallers had separated from the Benedictines to become a separate Order, they began acquiring estates in Britain (England, Scotland, Wales) and Ireland. They developed priories and commanderies, that is monastic houses, in each of these countries. As years passed three of these became the Knights' headquarters in Britain and Ireland — Clerkenwell in London, Torphichen near Edinburgh and Kilmainham in Dublin. The Order acquired its Clerkenwell estate about 1144, Torphichen about 1150 and Kilmainham about 1200.

As well as these three main establishments, the Order had many commanderies or lesser regional houses, of which there were eventually more than 40 across the three nations. In time the Order owned vast estates in Britain and Ireland. Possessing about 100 manors (rural estates) by the end of the fifteenth century, the Order had become among the greatest of landowners. At the same time, the heads of the priories, called Priors, became so powerful that they sat in parliament. In England they became members of the House of Lords, where they had the title "Lord St John". Some, like Robert Hales, whom a London mob massacred in 1381 during the Peasants' Revolt, even became government ministers. Hales, for instance, was England's Treasurer. This was why the angry mob wanted his head, which they paraded through the streets on a pike before fixing it above the entrance to London Bridge.

Within each Priory there were three ranks or grades of members — Knights, the warriors and administrators, recruited from the nobility; Chaplains, the clergy responsible for the Order's religious duties; and Serving Brothers, commoners, the workers who maintained the Order's buildings and estates. Each grade wore distinctive habits and strict rules governed their privileges and responsibilities. There were also female members of the Order, nuns who lived in separate nunneries. The Order eventually had 50 nunneries in Britain, the main one being the great priory at Buckland in Somerset.

Life was pleasant for the Order's members in its British and Irish priories and commanderies. Through their good works they enjoyed the respect of the community; they ate well; all their material needs were provided for; they had ample time for their religious devotions; and running their estates was skilled, fulfilling work. They therefore lived like country gentlemen. The only threat to this secure, comfortable lifestyle was their obligation to travel overseas periodically for military service. This was especially the case in times of crisis for the Order, as during the various crusades of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the Muslims' recapture of Jerusalem in 1187 and the sieges of Acre in 1291 and Rhodes in 1480 and 1523. At such times they were expected to answer the Order's call for help immediately then die defending it if need be.

In time the Order's priory at Clerkenwell became a grand campus containing the houses of the priory's chief officers; dormitories for the knights, chaplains and serving brothers; a large church and various chapels; assembly halls; infirmary (hospital); counting house (treasury building); armoury; schoolhouse; kitchens; stables, barn and other storage buildings; workers' cottages; courtyards and gardens, an inn; a cemetery; and a gatehouse at the main entrance. All that now survives is the crypt (basement) of the priory church, which was built some time before 1185, and the gatehouse built in 1504. The crypt is now a chapel of The Most Venerable Order while the gatehouse, now called St John's Gate, has become the worldwide headquarters of The Most Venerable Order, which has owned the building since 1874.



St John's Gate, Clerkenwell, London, a remnant of the former Grand Priory of England of the Knights Hospitaller and now the worldwide headquarters of the Order of St John.

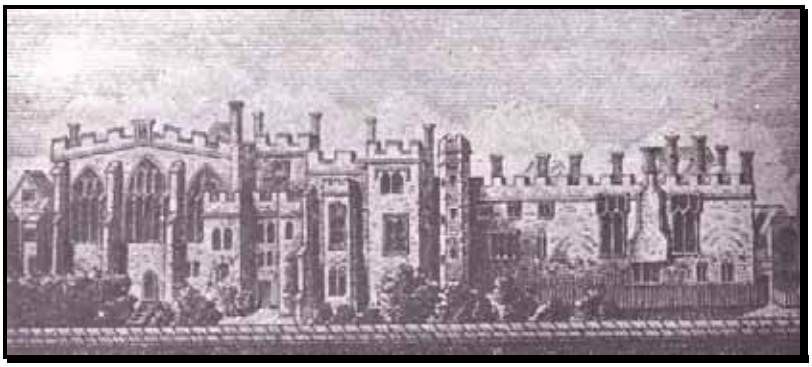
During the Peasant's Revolt in 1381, the mob hunting the Prior, Robert Hales, broke into the priory at Clerkenwell. They then torched many of the buildings. The rebuilding took most of the next century. By the time it was complete the priory was even grander than before. The buildings reflected the great power that the Order had attained in England in particular. The Priors had become friends and advisers of the kings, while the kings often visited the priory at Clerkenwell. As the influence of the priory had grown, its nomenclature had also changed to reflect its increasing prestige. For example, the title of the prior became Grand Prior while the priory became the Grand Priory of England.

In the end the Grand Priory's great wealth and power proved to be its undoing. Its downfall followed King Henry VIII's long, 1528–34 dispute with Pope Clement VII over his wish to divorce his first wife, Katherine of Aragon, marry Anne Boleyn and produce a male heir. When Clement declared Henry's marriage to Anne null and then excommunicated him, Henry responded by splitting the church in England away from the rest of the Catholic church and making himself its head. He then executed various prominent people who disagreed with him, among them two Knights Hospitaller, Adrian Fortescue and Thomas Dingley, who refused to swear allegiance to him.



The Blessed Adrian Fortescue, English Knight and martyr of the ancient Order of St John, beheaded for refusing to accept Henry VIII as head of the church in England.Above:

Henry had been a great friend of the Order. In 1511 he had accepted an honorary title as its "Protector" in England. Even as he was deciding to abolish the nation's other religious orders and their monasteries during 1539–40, he was negotiating with the Order's Grand Master on Malta for a compromise that might save the Grand Priory. As the Order's Protector in England, he argued, he should be accepted as its head there; but the Order's Grand Chapter (chief governing council) rejected that idea. And so Henry did away with the Order in England. An Act of parliament in April 1540 dissolved it and transferred its property to the crown, that is Henry's control. The extensive Hospitaller estates were a prize that Henry grasped eagerly.



The buildings of the former Grand Priory of England of the Knights Hospitaller in 1640, before their demolition.

Henry's Catholic daughter, Mary I (reigned 1553–58) briefly restored the Order in England but when her Protestant half-sister, Elizabeth I, succeeded her she abolished it again. Hoping it might rise again, the Grand Masters on Malta continued appointing nominal "Grand Priors of England" for a while, but these Knights were not English and had no influence there. The mediaeval English priory of the Order, which had survived for over 400 years, was at last dead. The modern Order that came into being in London in 1831 would be another creature altogether.

7. Revival of the *Langue* of England

Our Order, The Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem, dates back to 12 January 1831. On that day a small group of people who wished to revive the former Grand Priory of the Knights Hospitaller met in London. They elected the Reverend Robert Peat as their "Grand Prior". Six weeks later, on 24th February, Rev. Peat swore the solemn oath of an incoming Grand Prior of the ancient Order before Britain's Lord Chief Justice. With that ceremony completed, Peat and his

supporters imagined they had revived the Grand Priory or English *Langue* (French: "tongue" or "language") of the Order that Henry VIII and Elizabeth I had abolished almost three centuries previously.

(Note: On Rhodes and Malta the Hospitallers had organised themselves into language groups — English, French, German, Italian and Spanish. These groups were known as *Langues*, or "Tongues". The Order's *Langue* of England therefore consisted of the English-speaking Knights, that is those from England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales.)

The events that led to Peat's election as "Grand Prior" of the supposedly revived *Langue* are controversial. Historians now agree, however, on the basic facts. These are that the original promoters of the "revival" were a small group of French Knights acting without the knowledge or permission of the Grand Magistery (leadership) of the Order. The key figure was a mysterious figure who used what seems to have been a false noble title — the "Marquis de Sainte-Croix-Molay". The "Marquis" and his friends hoped to reconquer Rhodes for the Order. To carry out this plan they needed money, which they tried to raise on the London money market. Their plan needed the co-operation of a group of British citizens whom the "Marquis" and his colleagues persuaded to help them. It was this group that elected Peat as "Grand Prior".

Serious difficulties with the French Knights' plan soon arose. First, they failed to raise the money for their scheme, which most likely investors guessed was too far-fetched to be successful. Second, when the Grand Magistery of the Order discovered what the "Marquis de Sainte-Croix-Molay" had been doing, he was expelled from the Order. The Order's leaders were glad to be rid of him because his financial dealings reflected badly on them and the Order. Third, the "revived" *Langue* would have mainly married Protestants as its members but the Order was a Catholic organisation of people who took vows of celibacy. Fourth, the "Langue" wished to be independent. Fifth, serious disagreements soon developed between the Rev. Peat's supporters and others who opposed him then split away to form their own rival *"Langue"*. Finally, Rev. Peat died in 1837.

Despite these difficulties, the revived "*Langue*" survived, and its members were convinced it was the legitimate successor to the former Grand Priory of England. Over the next 20 years it conducted various negotiations with the Order's Grand Magistery (which had relocated in Rome in 1834). These aimed at having the *"Langue"* recognised as the properly restored, though Protestant, Grand Priory of the Order in England. The negotiations ended abruptly in December 1858, when the Grand Magistery publicly declared that the Order neither recognised nor was connected with the body claiming to be the revived Grand Priory of England.

Cast adrift by its parent Order, the "revived *Langue*", could easily have disappeared from history. That did not happen, however. Instead it reorganised itself under another name — "The Sovereign and Illustrious Order of St John of Jerusalem: Anglia". It was not, therefore, the revived Grand Priory of England but an entirely new organisation. Its members did not appreciate this point: they continued believing that their "Order" was the rightful successor to the Knights Hospitaller who had once lived at Clerkenwell, Torphichen, Kilmainham and on other Hospitaller estates.

The new "Order" underwent another change of names in 1875, when it adopted a new constitution and renamed itself "The Order of St John of Jerusalem in England". With the change of names its fortunes were also improving, and that is what we will now consider.

8. Foundations —Association, Eye Hospital and Brigade

The improving fortunes of the self-styled "Sovereign and Illustrious Order of St John of Jerusalem: Anglia" began in 1861, when it appointed William Drogo (1823–90), the seventh Duke of Manchester, as its Grand Prior. He brought into the organisation a new type of member. Previously the members had been mainly romantics and antiquarians who had fond hopes of reliving the long-gone age of chivalry. With such members, it was no surprise that the "revived *Langue*" had achieved little. The men that the Duke of Manchester brought into his "Grand Priory" were young, practical, ambitious and entrepreneurial. Two in particular who were the kind of energetic go-getters that organisations need if they are to prosper. The first was Sir Edmund Lechmere, who became the secretary-general and who in 1874 procured the St John's Gate building for the "Grand Priory". The other was Sir John Furley, one of the principal founders of British Red Cross.

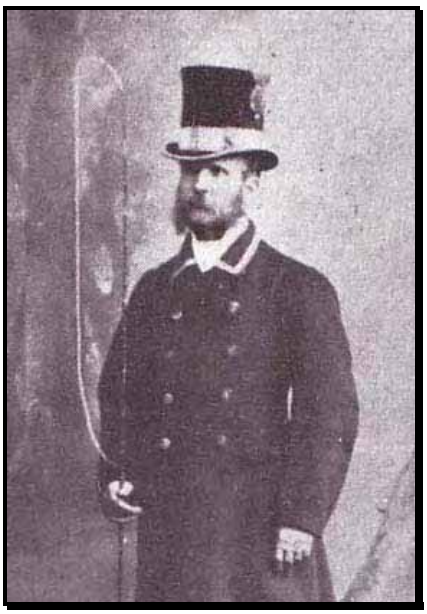


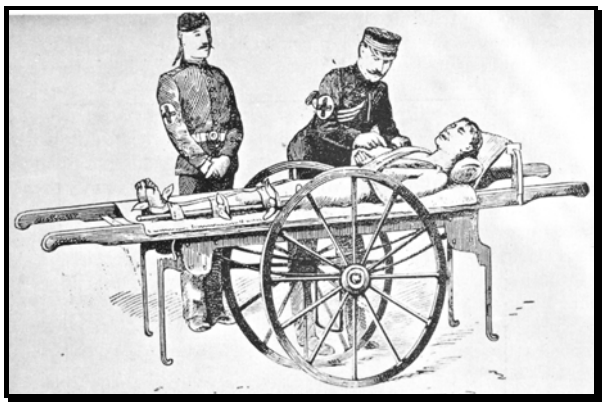


Above: Sir Edmund Lechmere (1826–94), co-founder of the St John Ambulance Association and General Secretary of the Order of St John.

Left: William Drogo Montagu (1823–90), seventh Duke of Manchester and Grand Prior of the Order of St John 1863–88.

As well as their membership of the "Grand Priory", the Duke of Manchester, Lechmere and Furley were also active in an organisation called the British National Society for the Sick and Wounded which sent teams of doctors, nurses, orderlies and medical supplies for the relief of both sides in the war between France and Prussia (now part of Germany) in 1871. The injuries suffered by troops and civilians alike in this war were appalling. Transporting the casualties to hospital quickly was yet another problem. Learning from its experience of the war, the Order developed the original "St John ambulance" — a detachable two-wheeled litter or stretcher mounted on light cart wheels, which it began marketing. In 1872 the order funded rudimentary ambulance transport services using these contraptions in several industrial towns. To promote these ventures, in 1874 it set up an "Ambulance Department", which then established the St John Ambulance Association in 1877 as a "foundation" for teaching first aid to members of the public.





Above: The original "St John ambulance" or "Ashford Litter", many of which were imported into Australia during the 1880s and 90s.

Left: Sir John Furley (186–1919), co-founder of the St John Ambulance Association and of British Red Cross, and promoter of the "Ashford Litter", the two-wheeled stretcher and successor to the original "St John ambulance".

The St John Ambulance Association's low-cost first aid courses were an instant success. The course comprised six lectures followed by practical and written examinations. Qualified medical practitioners lectured and examined the classes. The lectures followed a syllabus set out in a pocket-sized textbook first published in 1878 — *Aids for Cases of Injuries and Sudden Illnesses* by Surgeon-

Major Peter Shepherd, who had taught the very first class. Candidates who passed the exam received a certificate saying they were trained first aiders. In 1880 the Association began offering a second six-lecture course in "Home Nursing and Hygiene", and this too proved highly popular.

By 1882 the Association was offering first aid and home nursing courses from 130 training centres throughout Britain and Ireland. That year expansion overseas began when Association centres formed in Malta and Cannes. The following year, 1883, new centres were founded in the Bahamas, Bombay, Gibraltar and Melbourne. By the end of the 1880s few of Britain's colonies were without an Association centre.

Through the St John Ambulance Association, the new "Order of St John of Jerusalem in England" had stumbled upon a certain winner. Advancing industrialisation in Britain's towns and cities, and also the colonies of empire, was creating a vast reservoir of people eager to learn first aid. Rising accident rates on roads and railways, in factories and mines and on the docks and construction sites gave people a good reason to learn what the Association was teaching. The Association's training effort soon made "St John Ambulance" a household name.

With the Association going from strength to strength by the early 1880s, the order took other important steps by establishing two additional foundations. The first was the St John Ophthalmic Hospital in Jerusalem (renamed the St John Eye Hospital in 1999). Another of Lechmere's successful ventures, this was founded in 1882 with the co-operation of the Turkish Sultan, who then ruled Palestine. At first just a four-bed facility, it had a huge task in reducing the high incidence of endemic eye diseases among Palestinians. Like the Association before it, the Ophthalmic Hospital was a huge success. It treated 8,000 patients in its first six months — an average of 44 new patients a day.



The first St John Eye Hospital, on the Bethlehem Road, Jerusalem.

The third new St John foundation after the Association and Ophthalmic Hospital was the St John Ambulance Brigade, established in 1887. The Brigade, a voluntary but disciplined force of uniformed first aiders, was available for service at public gatherings. With a military-style organisational structure, it consisted of local units or "divisions" grouped into regional "corps", with an hierarchical rank system of privates, corporals, sergeants and officers. At its very first public duty, along the route of the Royal procession to Westminster Abbey for the 50th anniversary of Queen Victoria's reign on 21 June 1887, its members treated 200 casualties.

The Brigade was another great idea which caught on quickly. Within two years the Metropolitan (London) corps had 250 members across 10 divisions, while 34 provincial corps were also active. During the early1890s colonial divisions began forming. The first was an "ambulance" or male division formed in Dunedin, New Zealand, in December 1892, followed in May 1893 by a second overseas ambulance division in Cape Town and a third in Auckland in the December. The first female or "nursing" division formed in Cape Town about April 1894, followed a year later by another in Auckland. Australia's first were ambulance and nursing divisions in Glebe, Sydney, in March 1903.

9. The Royal Charter of 1888

Because of the spectacular success of its three modern "foundations" or branches — the Association (now called Training Branch in Australia), the Jerusalem Ophthalmic (Eye) Hospital and the Brigade (Operations Branch) — the Order won the respect of the public.

The Order also won Royal approval. Seeing the good works it carried out through its three foundations, Queen Victoria bestowed upon it a rare favour — a Royal Charter of Incorporation. The charter made it an official order of chivalry of the British empire, like other royal orders of chivalry such as the Order of the Garter, the Order of the Bath, the Order of the Thistle and the Order of St Michael and St George. She signed the charter on 14 May 1888, "in recognition of the excellent work performed by [the Order's] members…during the past half century, especially the establishment of the St John Ambulance Association".

The charter granted the Order yet another new name, a very long one emphasising the honourable, ancient heritage the Order believed it owned — "The Grand Priory in the British Realm of the Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem". (The word "Most" was added 67 years later, in a 1955 revision of the charter.)

The charter also installed the Queen herself as the Order's "Sovereign Head" and "Patron" and her oldest son, the Prince of Wales (and later King Edward VII), as its Grand Prior. Lions and unicorns ("the Queen's beasts") were added to the Maltese cross between its four arms to represent the royal patronage the organisation now enjoyed.



Queen Victoria, first Sovereign Head of the Order of St John (from a painting by Dudley Heath, in E.J. King, *The Knights of St John in the British Empire*).



Albert Edward, Prince of Wales (later Edward VII), first Grand Prior of the Order following the granting of the Royal Charter in 1888 (from a painting by Harold Speed, in E.J. King, *The Knights of St John in the British Empire*).

The Sovereign Military Order in Rome still regarded the new Order as an illegitimate upstart which was using its name and rituals without permission; but that hardly mattered now. The Royal Charter had finally made the new Order an official Order of St John in its own right. The circumstances of the dealings between the "Marquis de Sainte-Croix-Molay" and the Rev. Robert Peat in 1831 to "revive" the Hospitallers' long dormant *Langue* of England had certainly been suspect. But no one could now deny that through its good works and Royal Charter the Order had become very respectable.

10. St John Ambulance migrates to Australia

We saw in Section 8 above that overseas branches of St John Ambulance began springing up in 1882, and that the first Australian branch opened in Melbourne the next year. The Melbourne centre of the St John Ambulance Association was not, however, the first Association activity in Australia.

The earliest official Australian first aid class using the Association syllabus took place in Sydney in 1881. The person responsible was Dr Samuel Knaggs (1842-1921), an Irish born and trained medical practitioner then practising in Newcastle. His interest in first aid arose from a recent visit home to Europe. He was an enterprising chap with an interest in public health, and was always keen to publicise simple, reliable remedies for common ailments. He visited the Association headquarters in London. He obtained course materials there, and also permission to run classes in Sydney and Newcastle. He

conducted his first class in inner suburban Sydney, for workers at the Eveleigh railway workshops at Redfern. Realising the industrial relevance of first aid training, he had probably persuaded the railways authorities to let him run his initial class at Eveleigh. At its conclusion its graduates gave a public demonstration of their skills, at which they also received their first aid certificates. These were signed by the Prior of the Order, the Duke of Manchester, who happened to be in Sydney on business at the time.

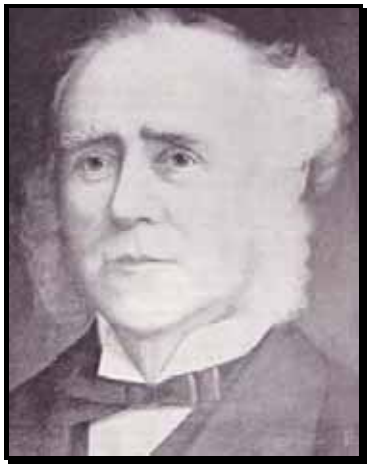
Knaggs's Eveleigh first aid class was what the Association termed a "detached" class. That is, it was a "one-off" class conducted according to the Association syllabus and examination procedures but not by or in an authorised Association Centre. Many such detached classes were run annually.

Knaggs's experience at Eveleigh had proved that first aid training could be conducted as well in Australia as 20,000 kilometres away at "Home" in Britain. Knaggs then taught further classes in Newcastle. In 1883 he moved to Sydney, where he lectured in surgery at the university, edited medical journals and served as a medical adviser to government agencies. By then the Melbourne Centre was in business and one was being planned in Adelaide. When the Newcastle Centre formed the next year, 1884, Knaggs probably watched its progress with interest even if not personally involved. Later in the decade he was a member of the group responsible for establishing the New South Wales Centre in Sydney. He was not admitted into membership of the Order — the usual reward for people who succeeded in establishing a St John Ambulance presence in colonial capital cities — but the honour of introducing the St John first aid course to Australia is properly his.

Many people share the honour of establishing Australia's eight State and Territory St John Ambulance branches. The following is a short summary of how they each began. Readers interested in knowing more should consult the official Australian histories of the Order and St John Ambulance, no fewer than nine of which were published in the 21 years 1983–2004. The details of these books are given below in Section 17, "References and Further Reading".

Victoria

The "founding father" of St John Ambulance in Victoria was Dr James Edward Neild (1824–1906). A number of prominent Melbourne citizens helped form the Victoria Centre of the St John Ambulance Association, but it was Neild who convened the public meeting in the Melbourne Town Hall on 13 June 1883 that agreed to establish it. Neild had been one of a number of Melbourne medical practitioners whom the Ambulance Department of the Order at St John's Gate contacted with the aim of establishing a local Centre. He had then discussed the idea with his colleagues and other leading citizens before calling the public meeting. The meeting voted to establish a Centre then appointed a committee to draft a constitution. A further meeting a fortnight later, on 26th June in the Athenaeum Hall, adopted the constitution, elected a governing council for the centre and appointed executive officers.



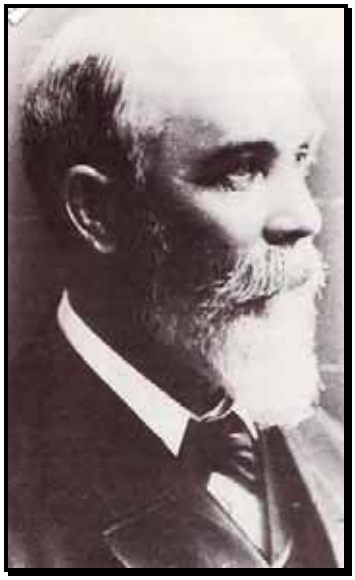
Dr James Edward Neild MD (1824-1906), principal co-founder of the Victoria Centre of the St John Ambulance Association.

After that, the Centre got down to the business of recruiting students for its public first aid classes, arranging for medical practitioners to teach and examine them and issuing first aid certificates to the successful students. After a slow start — only 18 classes and 590 students in the first two years — business eventually picked up as the population began appreciating the benefits of first aid knowledge. Within five years the Centre was teaching about 900 students annually from 24 sub-centres across Victoria, with a further three sub-centres in southern New South Wales and northern Tasmania.

South Australia

In South Australia the "founding father" of St John Ambulance was Major Arthur Carew Hunt, a British army officer serving in the South Australian military force. He had already received St John Ambulance training in England and he claimed to have helped establish an Association Centre at one of Britain's Mediterranean military bases. Apart from that we know little about him other than that he later moved to Sydney and became involved in St John work there as well.

Hunt called a public meeting in the YWCA Hall on 15 December 1884. Chaired by the Governor, Sir William Robinson, and attended by a large group of influential citizens, the meeting agreed to establish a Centre then elected a committee of management. Among those joining the committee was Dr Allan Campbell (1836–98), the committee chair, a Scottish medical practitioner who was an energetic worker for all causes promoting public health, and Dr Thomas Corbin Wilson (1843–1919), who became the Centre's chief lecturer and examiner.



Dr Allan Campbell, co-founder of the Adelaide Centre of the St John Ambulance Association and its most active early promoter.



Dr Thomas Wilson Corbin, co-founder and principal examiner of the Adelaide Centre of the St John Ambulance Association.

As earlier in Melbourne, the Centre in Adelaide soon got down to recruiting, teaching and examining its students, who were taught in segregated classes. Association rules at that time strictly forbade mixed classes of men and women because it was thought "immodest" to teach the sexes together.

Tasmania

St John Ambulance in Tasmania was unusual among Australian States because in its early decades it had not one but two separate Association Centres — one for the north of the island and another for the south.

The Northern Tasmania Centre, based at Launceston, was the first established. It formed following a public meeting in the Collegiate Institute on 30 March 1887. The meeting was chaired by the Rev. Francis Hales, the Anglican archdeacon of Launceston; however, the main organiser was Annie Duncan (1858–1943), who became the Centre secretary. The daughter of a medical practitioner, she was a recent immigrant from Adelaide, where she had gained the Association's first aid certificate.


St. John Ambulance Association

VICTORIA CENTRE.

This is to certify that Kathleen Dundas has attended a course of instruction at the Launceston Sub-Centre of the St. John Ambulance Association and is qualified to render "First Aid to the Injured."

VICTORIA CENTRE.

An early first aid certificate of the Launceston Sub-Centre of the St John Ambulance Association, issued in the Sub-Centre's second year, 1888, to Kathleen Dundas of Launceston. The signature of Annie Duncan, the Sub-Centre Secretary, appears at the foot of the certificate.

During the six years in which it remained active, the Launceston Sub-Centre ran as part of the Victoria Association Centre.

Unfortunately the Centre did not survive for long. It did good work for six years but then collapsed after 1893, when Annie Duncan left for England to train and work as a health inspector. The Centre reopened for several years during World War I, but went into recess again in 1919 after the wartime surge in demand for first aid training passed. It revived again in 1928 and survived until 1942, when it amalgamated with the Southern Tasmania Centre to form the one unified Tasmanian St John Ambulance Association Centre.

The Southern Tasmania Centre had started later than its Launceston counterpart. Several first aid classes were taught in Hobart in 1890–91, but there was no Association Centre there until 1909. The Centre, covering Hobart and the surrounding district, formed as a result of a public meeting in Hobart on 19 May 1909. The organisers of the meeting were men connected with the Hobart Division of the St John Ambulance Brigade, which had formed in 1908 as an outlier of the Brigade in New South Wales. They included the State Premier, Sir John Evans; S.N. Bulcraig, the Superintendent of the Hobart Brigade Division; Dr R.D. Campbell, the Divisional Surgeon; and Drs Wilfred Giblin and Gregory Sprott, two medical practitioners prominent in Tasmania's public health system.

Like its northern counterpart, the Southern Tasmania Centre went in and out of business several times. It became dormant after 1910, revived again about 1914 at the beginning of World War I but then fell dormant again about 1917. It came back to life in 1921 when there were plans for it to take over Hobart's ambulance transport facilities, but after considering this matter for two years it decided against accepting the responsibility. It then fell dormant again. It came back to life late in 1928, and this time managed to remain active until merging with the Northern Tasmania Centre in 1942.

New South Wales

Although Australia's earliest St John Ambulance first aid class had run in Sydney in 1881, New South Wales took another nine years to establish its own St John Ambulance Association Centre. In July 1887 it seemed that one might form. That was when Lady Annie Brassey, an enthusiastic English "missionary" for the Association, sailed into Sydney with her husband, Lord Thomas Brassey, aboard their yacht, *The Sunbeam*. Lady Brassey took it upon herself to call a public meeting in the Sydney Town Hall to promote the idea of a local Association Centre. The meeting, attended by the city's most prominent citizens, including the Governor, Premier, Lord Mayor and Chief Justice, voted to establish a Centre. These dignitaries all spoke of the importance of Sydney having a Centre, but *The Sunbeam* sailed away for Brisbane several days later, and the idea then seems to have been forgotten.



Anne, Lady Brassey (née Allnutt, 1839–87), world traveller, travel writer and "missionary" for St John Ambulance (from Internet website www.hmag.org.uk).

Eventually, three years later, the Centre became established at some time during the second half of 1890. Who was responsible is unclear, but the secretary was John Rendell Street, a well-known, merchant, pastoralist and parliamentarian. In the months he served as secretary before his death in 1891, Street brought many prominent citizens on to the Centre's governing council as patrons, vice-presidents and executive committee members. Street's son, grandson and great-grandson, all Chief Justices of New South Wales, were to serve terms as president of the Centre during the twentieth century.

Although the Centre in Sydney had started later than its counterparts in Melbourne, Adelaide and Launceston, it soon made up for lost time. Within five years, increasing numbers of students were learning first aid from a network of sub-centres extending across most of New South Wales. The Centre entered the twentieth century as Australia's largest, annually training over 1,000 students compared to Victoria's 600.

Western Australia

Western Australia's first Association Centre formed in Perth in 1892. The instigator was Mathieson Henry Jacoby (1869-1915), a 22 year old businessman from Adelaide who had arrived in Perth the year before. He had a first aid certificate from the Adelaide Centre and was keen to spread first aid knowledge. When he found that Perth had no St John Ambulance Centre, he set about forming one by inviting well known members of the Perth medical profession and the colony's leading citizens to a meeting. The meeting took place in the Perth Military Office on 15 March 1892. Those present agreed to become a Centre committee, which began drafting a constitution and arranging first aid classes.



Mathieson Henry Jacoby (1869–1915), founder of the Perth Centre of the St John Ambulance Association.



Dr George McWilliams (1865–1907), teacher of the earliest St John Ambulance first aid class in Western Australian and founder and first Commissioner of the St John Ambulance Brigade in Western Australia.

One of the committee members was Dr George McWilliams (1865-1907), who taught the first class. A colourful character, he soon emerged as the Centre's dominant figure. He went on to chair the Perth Association Centre and in 1904 founded Western Australia's St John Ambulance Brigade District, Australia's second. Shortly before his sudden death from enteric fever at the age of 42, McWilliams had become Western Australia's first Knight of the Order.

Unfortunately, the committee did not make a good start. It met only three times during 1892, and then no more. Why the committee stopped meeting is uncertain. Mathieson Jacoby left Perth for Melbourne so perhaps there was no one else interested enough to convene meetings. His replacement as secretary seems to have been unsatisfactory because the police had to be called in to recover from him the Centre's minute book and first aid equipment.

The Perth Centre eventually re-established itself seven years later. Jacoby, who had returned from Melbourne, again took the initiative by forming a group to revive the Centre. Its members included Dorothy Durlacher, a graduate from the Centre's first women's class. A governing council was appointed and this met for the first time on 14 June 1899. Only a couple of members remained from the previous committee, including Dr McWilliams, who became chairman.

The revived Centre started on a surer footing than the previous one. It received a grant of £50 from the Premier, Sir John Forrest, for the training of police. That almost enabled the council to clear its debts of £51 (equivalent to about $5000 in the values of the early 2000s). In its first 18 months of renewed operations it ran 10 classes, resulting in 84 first aid certificates. In that time it also extended its classes beyond Perth to Western Australia's eastern goldfields (in the Boulder-Kalgoorlie-Coolgardie triangle), where it opened two sub-centres. By 1910 it was teaching over 35 classes and awarding more than 400 certificates annually. These were not spectacular figures compared with those of the Centres in Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney. However, as the tally of classes, pupils, certificates and new sub-centres grew year by year, St John Ambulance was cementing itself into place as a great Western Australian community organisation.

Queensland

The main impetus for establishing a St John Ambulance Association Centre in Queensland came from the "missionary" activity of Lady Annie Brassey. As we saw above, she had already tried creating a Centre in Sydney. When her yacht, *The Sunbeam*, reached Brisbane, the next port of call after Sydney and Newcastle, she conducted a public meeting in the Brisbane Town Hall on 27 July 1887 as a first step towards establishing a local Association Centre. The meeting agreed to establish a Centre, but after that little more happened. The Brasseys sailed for Rockhampton aboard *The Sunbeam*, and then the enthusiasm whipped up by Lady Brassey subsided.



The yacht *The Sunbeam*, an etching of its voyage to Australia in 1886 (from Murdoch Wales & John Pearn, *First in First Aid: The History of St John Ambulance in Queensland*).

Interest in bringing St John Ambulance to Brisbane picked up again two years later in 1889. In May that year the chairman of the Brisbane School of Arts invited Dr John Thomson to deliver public lectures on first aid and home nursing at the school. Thomson had a keen interest in first aid. He had attended Lady Brassey's meeting as surgeon-major of the ambulance corps of the Queensland defence force and medical officer to the Queensland railways. Thompson's first aid course at the School of Arts was such a success that he went on to teach 11 more there. When the School of Arts realised there was a continuing public demand for first aid instruction, it decided to include the St John Ambulance course in its curriculum. It obtained permission from St John Ambulance headquarters in London to teach and examine the Association course.

Public interest in the St John Ambulance courses soon spread beyond Brisbane. At Ipswich two local medical practitioners, Drs Thornton and Geoghagan, taught a mixed class of men and women in 1890. That year another local doctor, Channing Neill, taught classes in the nearby coal-mining communities of Bundamba and Blackstone. Other classes formed in other towns. Bowen, Bundaberg, Charters Towers, Gympie, Mackay, Maryborough, Normanton, Rockhampton, Southport, Townsville and Warwick had all had at least one each by 1903.

By 1908, 19 years after first aid training began in Queensland, the Association had issued a total of 926 certificates in the State. Considering there was still no Queensland Centre, this was a creditable performance but the average was only 49 certificates annually. The other mainland States, all of which

now had Centres, were doing much better. Over the same period the New South Wales average was 587 certificates, Victoria's 506, South Australia's 184 and Western Australia's 104.

A Brisbane Centre of the Association finally formed in 1908. However, it effectively remained under the control of a branch of the School of Arts, the Central Technical College. The college's council president became the Centre's first president. This was William James Byram, a lawyer who was active in local scientific and cultural societies. The college director, David McConnel, became the secretary, continuing a role he had filled for the past 19 years. Dr Alfred Sutton and Dr Archibald Brockway, who were prominent in Brisbane medical circles, became its first medical officers or first aid lecturers.



Dr John Thomson, who taught the earliest St John Ambulance first aid class in Queensland in 1889 (from Murdoch Wales & John Pearn, *First in First Aid: The History of St John Ambulance in Queensland*).

Unfortunately, the new Centre did not prosper. The secretary, David McConnel, left the Technical College in 1909. He took with him his 20 years of experience in managing the college's first aid training program. The result was an administrative mess. The situation became worse when Drs Sutton and Brockway departed for overseas military service in World War I. Their place was taken by Dr Jack Mowbray Thomson, son of Dr John Thomson, who had taught the first classes in Brisbane in 1889. Jack Thomson was a busy general practitioner and honorary outpatient surgeon at the Brisbane General Hospital as well as being medical officer for the Queensland Railway Ambulance Corps. A huge wartime surge in demand for first aid training kept him so busy that the Centre's register of certificates was no longer maintained. In any Centre the register was the most important document — the record of who had earned the Association's certificates, where and when. Without it, no one could tell how many people had been trained, who had done the teaching and examining or who qualified for the Association's various awards.

The situation altered dramatically in 1916. That year the Queensland government took over the control of the Central Technical College. To cut costs, it discontinued the Association's first aid and home nursing courses. Fortunately, the Queensland Ambulance Transport Brigade (QATB) came to the rescue. This body was responsible for ambulance transport services in Queensland, and it had made a bid to take over the Association Centre earlier that same year. The QATB had applied to the Association's London headquarters for recognition as the Queensland Centre of the Association. The London headquarters agreed to the QATB request, and so St John Ambulance work in Queensland came under QATB control. And that was how things remained for the next 46 years, until 1962 when a truly independent Queensland Centre finally emerged.

The Territories

St John Ambulance Association Centres also formed in each of Australia's mainland Territories — the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory— but much later than in the six States.

In the **Australian Capital Territory** the earliest St John Ambulance first aid classes seem to have been conducted in the late 1930s, before the first Brigade Division formed in Canberra in January 1940. These were run by the New South Wales Association Centre, however. The New South Wales Centre remained in charge until 1979, when a separate Australian Capital Territory Centre formed.

In the **Northern Territory** St John Ambulance first aid training began in Darwin in 1952 and in Alice Springs in 1953. The classes were conducted under the authority of the South Australian

Centre, which remained at least nominally in control until a separate Northern Territory Centre was established in 1976.

11. The first Australian Brigade Divisions

Australia's St John Ambulance Brigade, called the Operations Branch from 1987, was generally an outgrowth of the St John Ambulance Association (Training Branch). Each State and Territory constituted a separate self-governing District of the Brigade. The term "District" remained in use until November 2000 when "State/Territory" was adopted instead. The following is a short summary of how each District (State/Territory) began. Readers interested in knowing more should consult the official Australian histories of the Order and St John Ambulance listed below in Section 17, "References and Further Reading".

New South Wales

The first of Australia's eight Brigade Districts formed in 1901. It grew from the practice classes and industrial sub-centres of the New South Wales Centre of the St John Ambulance Association. The practice classes were groups of people with first aid certificates who met to practise their first aid skills. Sometimes, particularly where classes had been run for commercial firms, factories and public utilities, Association sub-centres formed at such places to provide continual training so that there would always be trained first aiders close at hand in case of an emergency. In some cases the sub-centres even formed ambulance "Corps" and "Brigades" to provide swift transport to hospital for injured workers By 1900 the Association had a series of industrial sub-centres, most of them located in the industrial suburbs around the fringes of central Sydney.

The two events that led to these "Corps" becoming St John Ambulance Brigade Divisions were the inauguration of the Commonwealth of Australia and the opening of the first federal parliament in 1901. The military authorities in charge of the street parades for these events asked the New South Wales Association Centre to provide teams of first aiders. For Federation Day, 1st January, the Centre recruited 160 first aiders from its sub-centres to be on duty at intervals along the streets of Sydney wherever the parade was due to pass. Wearing Maltese Cross armbands, they were kept busy because the day was very hot. They treated hundreds of casualties, mostly victims of fainting, sunstroke, exhaustion and hysteria; and when not caring for patients they carried water and ice to spectators feeling faint from the heat and dehydration. The first aiders were back on duty in Sydney's streets on 28th May, when the Duke and Duchess of York (later King George V and Queen Mary) rode through Sydney after opening the Commonwealth Parliament in Melbourne. As on Federation Day, the first aiders treated large numbers of fainting, hysteria and collapse casualties.

Later in 1901 the Association Centre appointed four men to bring into being the New South Wales St John Ambulance Brigade District. As Commissioner and Deputy Commissioners the Centre chose two military engineers, respectively Lieutenant-Colonels Thomas Samuel Parrott (1842–1917) and John Henry Alexander Lee (1853–1927). Dr Reuter Emerich Roth (1858–1924), a physician who had lectured many of the Association's first aid classes, became the District Medical Officer; and another medical practitioner, Dr George Lane Mullins (1862–1918), became the District Superintendent. After only a year Parrott resigned as Commissioner and migrated to South Africa. Mullins then took his place. After he had spent a year as Commissioner, the London-based Chief Commissioner of the St John Ambulance Brigade Overseas, Maj.-Gen. James C. Dalton, promoted him to "Commissioner for Australia" in the hope that he would encourage other Brigade Districts to form interstate.


LIEUT.-COLONEL T. S. PARROTT,
Formerly of the Corps of Australian Engineers.


LIEUTENANT-COLONEL ROTH, D.S.O.,


MAJOR G. LANE MULLINS,
Staff-Officer, Medical Services.

Australia's first St John Ambulance Brigade officers: left, T.S. Parrott (District Commissioner); centre, W.E. Roth (District Medical Officer); right, G.L. Mullins (District Superintendent). (All three photographs are from old newspaper files.)

The first actual Brigade Divisions did not formally register for more than a year after the appointment of the senior Brigade officers. One reason for the delay was the reluctance of some Association industrial sub-centres to join the Brigade, which they thought would be too regimented. Joining the Brigade meant wearing military-style uniform and belonging to an organisation that saw itself as a military medical reserve force. Some of the oldest and most successful of the industrial sub-centres therefore refused to come into the Brigade. Others, however, reconstituted themselves as Brigade Divisions during 1903. The first to do so was the Glebe sub-centre in inner suburban Sydney. Two Divisions from among its members registered with the Brigade on 20th March. One was an Ambulance or men's Division, the other a Nursing or women's Division. The next to be registered, on 25th March, was the Dixson's Tobacco Factory Division in Newtown. Then came Western Suburbs on 9th September, Sydney Gasworks on 21st September, and Mort's Dock on 23rd September.

After that the number of Divisions registering with the Brigade grew steadily. By September 1912 New South Wales District comprised 14 Ambulance Divisions and six Nursing Divisions; and total District strength had reached 336 (216 men and 120 women). On voluntary public duty that year the members treated a total of 1,907 casualties. In addition they were attending an annual training camp and were competing in annual District first aid and nursing competitions.

Western Australia

Western Australia was the second State after New South Wales to have a Brigade District. Brigade history in Western Australia begins with Dr George McWilliams, who had taught the first class of first aid students in Perth in 1892 and was a foundation member of the Perth St John Ambulance Association Centre.

McWilliams was an early Brigade convert. In 1902 he travelled to London, where he visited the local Brigade headquarters. On returning home he persuaded the Association Centre council to conduct a trial by placing a team of volunteer first aiders on duty at Perth's Royal Agricultural Show in 1903. They handled few cases, but the experiment was a success. The council therefore agreed in January 1904 to advertise among graduates of the first aid classes for recruits to form a Perth Brigade Division. After a long delay, the new Division met for the first time on 23rd December that year.



Dr George McWilliams (front right), founder and first Assistant Commissioner of the St John Ambulance Brigade in Western Australia with his Brigade "troops", 1905. The uniforms they are wearing do not appear to be those of the Brigade and were possibly borrowed from the military forces.

The Perth Division remained fairly small during its first full year, 1905, with only one more member than the minimum 12 required for registration. As well as a Divisional Superintendent and the Divisional Surgeon there were a sergeant, a corporal and nine privates. Above them all was none other than McWilliams himself. He took the title "Assistant Commissioner", the term then used for the heads of Districts in the Brigade "Overseas".

Although small, the Division maintained a busy schedule of public appearances. They performed 52 public duties in the first year — an average of one a week. Most of these came through McWilliams' connections with the Perth cycling and turf clubs, where he was official surgeon. Other events they attended included the police tournament, the Royal Agricultural Show and football matches. The Division also acted as the local branch of the Australian Army Medical Corps. This unusual

arrangement would have been McWilliams' doing because he was a captain in the Western Australian army reserve. The Division went into camp with the Army at Easter 1905; and they also held their meetings and parades in the Army Drill Hall.

In its first couple of years, the Perth Division relied heavily on McWilliams. He personally undertook to fund it himself, and it was he who found it work to do. He was also the Association Centre chairman as well as Brigade Assistant Commissioner, and he remained the leading figure of both bodies. McWilliams was a domineering chap, however, and that led to much dissatisfaction. During the Division's second year, 1906, there was a spate of resignations. Then McWilliams died suddenly at the beginning of 1907. Membership continued falling, and by the end of 1908 Divisional strength was down to a rump of just five. No new Assistant Commissioner was appointed to replace McWilliams, and none would be appointed until 1912. Meanwhile the leadership seems to have come from the Divisional Surgeon, Dr H. A. Lesghen. To their credit, this small group of members kept the Division alive. Somehow they managed to keep faith with their clients by attending all the events on their calendar.

Another serious obstacle for the Brigade in Western Australia was the strength of rival ambulance bodies linked to the Association Centre. The fire brigade, the railways, the police, the wharf labourers' union and the Kalgoorlie-Boulder gold-mines all had their own ambulance corps affiliated with the Association. These bodies siphoned off first aiders who might otherwise have come into the Brigade. Keen first aiders like those in these industrial ambulance corps had little incentive to join the Brigade because they already had an outlet for their interests and skills on the job.

Despite its early difficulties, the Perth Division survived against the odds. The decline in membership bottomed out in 1908. After that its numbers steadily rose. Fourteen new members joined in 1909, and by the end of the year eight of its 21 members held Association medallions (given for passing three first aid examinations in three years). Until then the Western Australian Brigade District had been a one-Division organisation. That year, however, a second Ambulance (men's) Division of 21 members formed at Midland Junction on Perth's eastern outskirts. A third Ambulance Division with 27 members formed in 1911 at Boulder on the eastern goldfields, and a fourth at North Fremantle in 1912. The first Nursing (women's) Division was established in Perth the next year, 1913, with Mrs Harriet E. Parker in command as "Lady Superintendent" and Dr Gertrude Mead as Divisional Surgeon.



Dr H.G. Tymms, St John Ambulance Brigade Commissioner in Western Australia 1915–39.

The formation of a Division at Boulder was an important development because the District then split into separate "Coastal" (that is Perth) and "Goldfields" Districts. Dr W. Trethowan became Assistant Commissioner of the Coastal District and C.A. Bolton was in charge of the Goldfields District. Bolton had been active in the Mines Ambulance and Rescue Corps, which was affiliated with the St John Ambulance Association. He had great ambitions for enrolling 200 new members in six Ambulance Divisions and a Nursing Division. These high hopes came to nothing, however, because apart from the North Fremantle and Perth Nursing Divisions in 1912-13 Western Australia saw no new Divisions until 1924. Bolton himself went off to World War I with the Army Medical Corps in 1915. After his departure the separate Goldfields and Coastal Districts were rejoined under a single Assistant Commissioner. This was Dr Herbert G. Tymms, who went on to remain Commissioner for an Australian record period of 25 years. Under Tymms the Brigade District in Western Australia enjoyed a period of continued growth. During the 1920s many new Divisions formed in country areas, often with links to local ambulance transport units and the railways. By the time of Tymms' retirement in 1939 District strength had risen to 42 divisions with 1,063 members.

Tasmania

The Brigade first came to Tasmania in 1908. Like the Launceston and Hobart St John Ambulance Association Centres, however, it was absent more than it was present in the earlier decades.

Tasmania's first Brigade Division formed in Hobart in 1908. It came about through urging by the New South Wales Deputy Commissioner, Dr Thomas Storie Dixson. Dixson had visited Hobart on a holiday in 1906. Finding no St John Ambulance activity there, he contacted the mayor, the Anglican bishop and YMCA secretary to persuade them to establish a local Association Centre. On returning to Sydney, he sent the New South Wales Centre secretary, B.R. Rainsford, to Hobart to help organise a class there. A class was successfully recruited, taught, examined and presented with first aid certificates by the end of the year. The graduates became the nucleus of Tasmania's first Division. Called the Hobart YMCA Division, it was registered as part of the New South Wales District on 18 November 1908 with S.N. Bulcraig as Superintendent. How long the Division survived is uncertain because it left few records behind. It does not seem to have survived World War I. During the early 1920s, the Association Centre in Hobart talked several times of reviving it, but nothing came of this. In any case, the Hobart Centre itself became inactive in 1923 and remained in recess for five years.



Dr Thomas Storie Dixson KStK (1854–1932), New South Wales Commissioner of the St John Ambulance Brigade 1914–23, and previously Assistant Commissioner, who introduced the Brigade to Tasmania.

After the Hobart Centre revived itself in 1928, it periodically received requests from sporting clubs wanting first aiders to attend their matches. In 1933 such requests prompted a member of the Centre committee, Robert Wallace, to propose that the committee should re-establish the Brigade. A further 18 months of talking about this idea finally led to a public meeting in the Hobart Town Hall on 10 April 1935. The meeting voted to establish two Divisions — Hobart No. 1 Ambulance and Hobart No. 1 Nursing. The Hobart Mercury newspaper welcomed the reappearance of the Brigade. It published an editorial which said that St John Ambulance was "one of the seldom mentioned triumphs of civilisation". When Col. James Sleeman, the Chief Commissioner of the St John Ambulance Brigade Overseas, visited Hobart in 1936 he found that the Divisions were "a smart, well uniformed and well drilled body of men and women able to perform valuable duty at any time".

Meanwhile up in Launceston the Northern Tasmania District came into being only a month before Sleeman's visit. Several years earlier there had been separate Launceston-and-Devonport Ambulance and Nursing Divisions. These had formed mid-1932 but both disbanded within a year or two. Their driving force had been Mary F. Robson, secretary of the Northern Tasmania Centre of the St John Ambulance Association. It was she who now, 1936, did most to revive the Brigade in the north. At first the Northern Tasmanian District had just one Division — Launceston No. 1 Ambulance. A parallel women's Division, Launceston No. 1 Nursing, did not form until September 1938. The Launceston Divisions, like those in Hobart, succeeded at the second attempt. They were still active more than 60 years later in the early 2000s.

Colonel Sleeman had strongly urged the two Tasmanian Brigade Districts to co-operate closely. The Divisional leaders in Hobart and Launceston accepted this advice; however, it took several years to

overcome their inter-city rivalries by amalgamating the Northern and Southern branches to form the one unified District. The amalgamation came in 1942, when the Tasmanian St John bodies opted to join the new federal Australian Commandery of the Order of St John. With the various State branches of St John Ambulance now federated, it was common sense for the Brigade to have only the one Tasmanian District.

Victoria

By the time the first Brigade Divisions formed in Sydney in 1903, the Victorian St John Ambulance Association Centre had been in business for 20 years. In that time it had trained over 14,000 people in first aid. It also had 25 active sub-centres around Victoria. A number of practice classes were attached to the sub-centres. There was no shortage of keen first aiders to stage demonstrations and competitions at the annual displays the Centre conducted before capacity crowds in the Melbourne Town Hall. Despite this enthusiasm for first aid, Victoria had no Brigade Divisions until 1910, nearly a decade after the foundation of the New South Wales Brigade District.

Why, then, did it take so long for the State with the oldest St John Ambulance organisation to form Brigade Divisions? There is no obvious reason. The deep economic depression of the 1890s had hit Victoria worse than the other colonies, but Melbourne was still a large city with 612,000 citizens in 1910. A population of that size would have provided enough work for a dozen or more Brigade Divisions.

The best explanation for the Brigade's slow start in Victoria is probably the Victorian Association Centre's involvement in ambulance transport work. The Centre has taken over responsibility for Melbourne's ambulances from the fire brigade during 1900–01. By 1910 the ambulance transport service was becoming a major enterprise. Keeping up with the city's steadily increasing demand for ambulance facilities was a major task for the Centre committee. Eventually it proved a task too large. By World War I horse-drawn ambulances were being replaced everywhere by motorised ambulance vans, which cost more to buy and maintain. Melbourne's first motor ambulance van, a Renault, was purchased in 1910 for £400 (or 170 times the minimum male weekly wage). Running it caused the Centre's ambulance account to suffer continual losses. By 1916 the ambulance service had just about bankrupted the Centre. To save itself, the Centre withdrew from ambulance work and passed the service over to another separate and independent body. This was the Victorian Civil Ambulance Service, which the Centre established. With the ambulance service thus occupying most of its attention, the Victorian Association Centre probably placed low priority on forming Brigade Divisions.

What finally prompted the formation of Brigade Divisions in Victoria was an occasion when huge crowds gathered. This was the visit to Melbourne of the United States navy's "Great White Fleet" of 16 battleships at the end of August 1908. The sailors were due to march through the city on 31 August. The local official in charge of first aid arrangements was Surgeon-Major George Horne of the Army Medical Corps. He planned for 16 emergency ambulance stations along the route. To help staff them he formed a temporary "Volunteer Ambulance Corps" from the certificated pupils of the Association Centre's classes. During the march the first aid teams dealt with about 500 cases at Horne's emergency ambulance stations.



Dr George Horne (1860–1927), first Commissioner of the St John Ambulance Brigade in Victoria, 1909–21 (photograph from Amelia F. Field, *The Order of St John in Victoria: Our First Hundred Years*).

The Association Centre hoped that a Brigade Division would grow from the group of first aiders who helped during the visit of the US fleet. What emerged was not a Brigade Division, however, but another creature altogether — the First Aid Volunteers' Association (FAVA). The FAVA ran very much like Brigade Divisions did elsewhere, but with a different emphasis. The FAVA did not stress discipline, parades, uniforms and drilling as much as the Brigade did. Unlike Brigade Divisions, it was open to both sexes, and it adopted an interesting program of mixed educational, service and social activities. Its members also went on public first aid duty at events like the Australian Natives Association fête, the Warrnambool–Melbourne bike race, the St Patrick's Day procession and the Naval & Military carnival. The FAVA proved highly successful: starting with 50 members in 1908 it had 300 by 1915. At first the Association Centre supported the FAVA, but suddenly withdrew its support in 1915. The likely reason is that the Centre council had come round to thinking that Brigade Divisions would not flourish in Victoria while the FAVA was there as a rival.



Members of the First Aid Volunteers' Association, Melbourne, 1980–09.

By this stage there had been a Brigade District and Divisions in Melbourne for five years. The Commissioner was none other than Surgeon-Major Horne, who was appointed at some time in late 1909 or early 1910. He retained the position until 1921. The first Division, Hawthorn Ambulance, registered on 10 March 1910, followed a couple of months later, on 3rd May, by a parallel Hawthorn Nursing Division. Neither lasted much more than a year, mainly because parallel Metropolitan Nursing and Ambulance Divisions had formed at about the same time and then "poached" both public duties and members from the Hawthorn Divisions. The registration certificate of the Metropolitan Ambulance Division has survived. It tells us much about this early Division, which was a high-powered unit. Its Superintendent was Harry Osgood-Cannon, the manager of the Association Centre's city ambulance transport service, and the Divisional Surgeon was Dr H.W. Bryant of the Army Medical Corps.

The next Division to form, Brighton Nursing, registered on 3 October 1910. After that few more Brigade Divisions formed in Victoria until World War I produced a rash of new Divisions in 1914. The next to be formed was the Footscray Ambulance Division, on 21 December 1912. (By 2004 it was the Division with the longest period of unbroken service in the Victorian District.) Then came Brunswick, Essendon, Fairfield, Geelong, Middle Park, Mildura, Moorabbin and Williamstown Ambulance Divisions soon after the war began. The war also produced a spate of new Nursing Divisions, possibly because the Brigade offered women one of their best opportunities for war service. By the war's end in 1918 the District had 23 Nursing Divisions. The war had thus given the Brigade in Victoria a huge boost, and by the time it ended the Brigade was firmly in place as one of Victoria's best known community service organisations.

South Australia

South Australia's Brigade District emerged over a three-year period between 1911 and 1914. It came into being partly because of nagging by George Lane Mullins, the Commissioner for Australia in Sydney. Mullins made repeated efforts over seven years to persuade the Adelaide Association Centre to form a South Australian Brigade organisation. His first attempt was in 1904, when he wrote to the Centre committee asking it to sponsor the formation of South Australian Brigade Divisions. The committee, however, decided against forming Brigade Divisions. In August 1906 the committee received another Mullins letter suggesting that it begin forming Brigade Divisions in Adelaide.

By coincidence, at about this time the Centre committee received another inquiry about the Brigade. This was from one A.S. Lindsay, who wanted to know if an Adelaide Brigade Division was being planned. Lindsay was one of the Centre's recent graduates. Little is now known about him — not even what his initials stood for — but he later became the key figure in establishing the South Australia Brigade District. During 1907 Lindsay quit Adelaide to live in Christchurch, New Zealand, where he spent almost three years. While there, he joined the Brigade. He worked his way up to Superintendent of its Canterbury–West Coast District. In his time as Superintendent, District strength grew from 220 to 500 and the number of Divisions multiplied from eight to 19. When he left New Zealand to return to Adelaide in 1909 they presented him with an illuminated address expressing their gratitude.

While Lindsay was away in Christchurch, the Adelaide Centre seems to have done little more about setting up local Brigade Divisions. Indeed it did no more until November 1911, when Lindsay attended its monthly committee meeting at the invitation of the chairman to outline the Brigade's work in New Zealand. The committee was impressed because it invited Lindsay to become a committee member. He accepted the invitation. At the committee's next monthly meeting, in February 1912, it agreed to establish a Brigade District in South Australia. The committee also agreed that Lindsay should become the Assistant Commissioner.

After that nothing much happened for another 15 months. No Divisions formed. The District existed on paper but not on the ground. At long last in September 1912 Lindsay informed the Centre committee that South Australia's first Brigade Division had formed. It comprised 23 members of the Municipal Tramways Trust. For the next year and a half South Australia remained a one-Division Brigade District.

The District finally began expanding during 1914, after it took a very important step forward that May, when Lindsay had made a deal with the railways ambulance officer, R.V. Bulman. The deal involved the Railway Ambulance Corps (RAC), the body that co-ordinated the first aid units operating within the State railway system. Lindsay and Bulman agreed that the RAC would join the Brigade as a separate corps with Bulman as its Chief Superintendent. To start with, there would be five metropolitan railways Divisions within the Brigade — Adelaide, Islington, Mile End, Port Adelaide and Glenelg. The five railways Divisions began functioning as a Brigade Corps straight away. The Adelaide Racing Club soon accepted an offer they made to provide five first aiders (one from each Division) at all its future race meetings. On duty they wore Maltese Cross badges on both sleeves to signify that they represented the Brigade. Lindsay was in charge, mounted on a horse. His task was to ride around the race track on horseback, keeping an eye out for mishaps. Whenever he detected trouble, he dashed to the scene on his steed with his first aiders following on foot as fast as their cumbersome stretchers and first aid kits would allow.

In his final report to the Centre committee in September 1914, shortly before departing overseas for World War I military service, Lindsay told the committee he had just formed a new Division in Rose Park. As well as this one, he had three railways divisions (down from five) and four "unattached" Divisions, that is units not connected to any particular industry or employer but based on a locality. These comprised Adelaide Ambulance, Port Adelaide Ambulance, Adelaide No. 1 Nursing and Adelaide No. 2 Nursing, also known as YWCA. District strength totalled 181.

With Lindsay gone, the railways ambulance officer, R.V. Bulman, was temporarily appointed Assistant Commissioner. After less than two months in the position he resigned in February 1915 because of the pressure of work in his railways job. It was not his last go at being Commissioner, however. He later spent several periods as Acting Assistant Commissioner when his two successors, George F. Hussey and Dr S.L. Dawkins, were away on leave. By then he had returned to active Brigade administration as District Superintendent.

The Brigade remained leaderless for several months after Bulman quit. Eventually the Centre committee persuaded George F. Hussey to take on the job. Hussey was a St John Ambulance stalwart. He was the Superintendent of the Brigade's recently founded Adelaide Central Ambulance Division. He had been a member of the Centre committee since 1899. His St John Ambulance connections went back to 1887, when he had begun organising first aid classes for a workers' self-improvement organisation, the Literary Societies Union. He was to be the Assistant Commissioner for the South Australian record period of 16 years.



The Glenelg, Adelaide, Division of St John Ambulance Brigade, with the Assistant Commissioner, G.F. Hussey at the centre, front row; next to the right is the District Superintendent, R.V. Bulman.



Dr Sydney Letts Dawkins, Commissioner of the St John Ambulance Brigade in South Australia 1931–46 and Commandery Commissioner 1941–46.

Sadly, the Brigade in South Australia went backwards under Hussey's leadership. He was a prickly chap who seemed to resent the popularity of R.V. Bulman after he had returned to the Brigade as District Superintendent. Perhaps seeing Bulman's popularity as a threat to his authority, Hussey sacked him. This caused an uproar among the Divisions. Hussey ignored the wave of dissatisfaction with his leadership. He hung on to his position tenaciously for the next two years. In that time he refused to have anything to do with Bulman. He finally went after some of his members wrote to complain to Dr T. Storie Dixson, the Commissioner for Australia. (Dixson had been appointed to this position in 1924 after 20 years as Commissioner of the New South Wales District.) What action Dixson took is unknown, but possibly he gave Hussey two simple choices — retire or be sacked. Hussey retired soon after, early in 1931.

The District only began growing again under Hussey's successor, Dr Sydney Letts Dawkins, who was Commissioner 1931–46. (He was also the foundation Brigade Chief Commissioner for Australia during the period of the Australian Commandery of the Order, 1941–46.) Under Dawkins the Brigade in South Australia grew remarkably. When he replaced Hussey in 1931, he took over a District with fewer than 200 members in five Divisions. At the end of his 15 years as Commissioner he left behind him 1,667 members in 63 Divisions. By that time the District was Australia's second largest after New South Wales.

Queensland

Queensland lagged well behind the other States in establishing a Brigade District. Brigade Divisions had formed in the other five by 1915. Except for those in Tasmania, which weren't finally secure until the late 1920s, the Brigade was fairly firmly established in the other four by the opening of World War I. In Queensland this didn't happen for another 35 years.

Brisbane actually did have a short-lived Brigade Division between 1915 and the early 1920s, as we will now see. However, a separate, fully formed Queensland Brigade District did not come into being until 1953.

Brisbane's early Division formed during 1915. It was founded by an English immigrant, Robert James Moore, probably with encouragement from the Brigade Commissioner in New South Wales, Dr Thomas Storie Dixson. Moore had been a Divisional Officer of the Brigade in Manchester for a couple of years before coming to Brisbane in 1913. When he found no Brigade Divisions present in Brisbane, he set about forming one. Using the title "Superintendent of the Queensland District", in 1915 he began recruiting members for his Brisbane Division and within several years built its strength to 10 men and 10 women. Its men wore khaki uniforms similar to those then worn by Brigade members in Western Australia and South Africa. The jacket had a black button-up collar with silver Brigade badges.

During the Christmas holidays in 1918 Moore and two members of his Division began offering a first aid service to holiday makers around Coolangatta, in the Gold Coast area south of Brisbane. They set up camp at Kirra Beach then offered treatment to anyone seeking it. They were back again the following Easter, and after that they regularly staffed the Gold Coast beaches around Coolangatta and Tweed Heads during the Christmas–New Year and Easter holidays. They were doing so well that in

1921 they based a member permanently in Coolangatta and began running a local ambulance service there with a Dodge ambulance van.

All went well until March 1922 when the Division applied to the State government for a subsidy to help run the Coolangatta ambulance. It then met serious difficulties because the Queensland Ambulance Transport Brigade (QATB) had a monopoly over the State's ambulance transport system. The QATB persuaded the government to refuse the subsidy. Without government support the Division could not afford to maintain its ambulance. Its ambulance service struggled on for another 18 months but had to close before the end of 1923. The Division itself disbanded the next year because it could not pay its debts, which the New South Wales Brigade District obligingly paid off.

The St John Ambulance Brigade returned to Queensland in the early 1950s, at the urging of Sir Samuel Burston, the Brigade's Chief Commissioner. He persuaded Col. (later Sir) Kenneth Fraser, a Brisbane surgeon, to become Commissioner and form a Queensland Brigade District. He appointed Mrs Dorothy Davidson as District Superintendent and together they began forming Nursing (women's) Divisions in Brisbane, Ipswich, Nundah, Southport and Toowoomba. By 1952 the District had 10 Divisions and that year the Nundah Division won the Sleeman Shield for competition between Nursing Division teams at the national nursing championships in Sydney.



Sir Kenneth Fraser, founding Commissioner of the St John Ambulance Brigade in Queensland, 1951–60.

By this stage the QATB had begun worrying about Fraser's and Davidson's ambitions for the Brigade. Certain key QATB leaders wished to halt the Brigade's further development in Queensland. They wrongly believed that the Brigade would take work away from the QATB's salaried ambulance officers.

What then took place was perhaps the longest, nastiest and most destructive quarrel in the entire history of St John Ambulance in Australia. Over the next nine years, 1953–62, the Queensland Brigade District and the QATB were at war with each other. In the end, the Priory of the Order intervened on the side of the Brigade District, but that worsened the conflict. Matters finally came to a head at the annual general meeting of the Queensland St John Ambulance Association Centre in March 1962. Fraser's supporters voted the QATB faction out of office. That ended the QATB's 46-year period of controlling St John Ambulance in Queensland.

Freed from its QATB shackles, the Queensland Brigade District was then able to expand its network of Divisions across its State, much as the other Brigade Districts had done decades previously.

Northern Territory

The person responsible for bringing the Brigade to the Northern Territory was Norman Bradbury, who in 1952 arranged a first aid class for Department of Civil Aviation employees in Darwin. He then organised a Brigade Division from among the 18 people who passed the examination. The next year he helped people in Alice Springs form a Division there. A number of its members were railway workers who had received first aid training in South Australia. Because no separate St John Ambulance Association or Brigade structure existed in the Northern Territory, Bradbury arranged for his first training activities to come under the supervision of the South Australian Association Centre. Similarly the Northern Territory Brigade Divisions became a Sub-District of the South Australian Brigade District.



Norman Bradbury (right), founder of St John Ambulance in the Northern Territory, meets the Commissioner-in-Chief, Sir Otto Lund (left) while Dr John Pedler (centre), the District Surgeon (and later Commissioner) for the St John Ambulance Brigade in South Australia looks on, 1955..

By the mid-1960s the Brigade Sub-District had Divisions in Darwin, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs. The Darwin Division had grown to 75 members by 1966. With both male and female members, it was a "Combined" Division. Further Combined Divisions followed in the late 1960s. A Darwin Combined Cadet Division formed; then came further adult and Cadet Divisions at Casuarina, one of Darwin's newer suburbs.

During the mid-1960s the Darwin Division also developed a small local ambulance transport service. By 1967 this had two ambulance vehicles entirely staffed by Brigade volunteers. Both vehicles had been bought with money raised from donations. To house them the Branch Council purchased a property in Parap, a suburb behind Fannie Bay. There they built a two-storey St John centre using their own labour and donated materials. The new building included a large lecture hall, a radio communications centre, garage space for both vehicles, storage space and meeting facilities for the Division.

At the end of 1974, "Cyclone Tracy" on 24th–25th December wrecked much of Darwin. The havoc caused by the cyclone gave Brigade members an opportunity to expand their ambulance service. They gave such outstanding service to Darwin's traumatised citizens in the days following the cyclone that the government soon gave them responsibility for all of the city's ambulances. The Brigade in the Northern Territory soon became Australia's most vigorous St John Ambulance organisation. This could be seen in Brigade strength. Although the Brigade's strength was declining nationally, in the Northern Territory it rose from 270 in 1974 to 972 in 1983 — an astonishing increase of 260%. Relative to population, the Northern Territory had become by far the strongest Brigade District.

With growth and strength like this, the St John Ambulance organisation in the Northern Territory had no need to continue working under a South Australian "umbrella". By the late 1970s, if not before, it was ready for independence. The formal handover from South Australia to a newly constituted St John Council for the Northern Territory took place at a ceremony in Darwin on 16 July 1977. The Chancellor of the Order of St John in Australia, Sir George Stening, was there to present the new constitution to the incoming St John Council members. With that, the former Brigade in the Northern Territory became a District in its own right, with Dr C.G. Mills as the District Commissioner

Australian Capital Territory

The Australia Capital Territory (ACT) became a District of the Brigade in June 1988 following nine years as a Sub-District after separating from New South Wales District in 1979. It remains Australia's smallest and newest State/Territory Operations Branch organisation. It also became the only single-city District, all its Divisions being within suburban Canberra.

The first known St John Ambulance Brigade activity in the ACT took place at the opening of Canberra's first Parliament House on 9 May 1927. A team of nine Brigade men from Sydney travelled down to Canberra for the occasion.

The first local Brigade unit in Canberra was the 1st Canberra Nursing Division. Like all later Brigade Divisions in the ACT until 1979, it was formed within the New South Wales Brigade District. The Division was registered on 1 January 1940 with 20 members. This Division remained in business for the next 27 years, until it disbanded in 1967.

The earliest men's unit in Canberra was the 1st Canberra Ambulance Division, formed five months after the women's Division. It registered on 9 May 1940 with Mr Francis Strickland as Superintendent and Dr David Henry as Divisional Surgeon. Another men's unit, ACT Ambulance Division No. 1, registered on 24 September 1952 with C.W. Bellingham as Superintendent and Dr John James as surgeon. Among regular public duties for the Brigade men was the staffing of the first aid hut at the Cotter Reserve, a popular picnic place at the foot of Canberra's water supply reservoir.

The first two ACT Cadet Divisions, one each for boys and girls, formed in 1960. The boys' unit was the Canberra–Reid Ambulance Cadet Division. The girls' unit was the Canberra–Lyneham Nursing Cadet Division.

In July 1961 the New South Wales Brigade Commissioner, Dr Selwyn Nelson, acknowledged the increasing importance of Brigade work in Canberra by raising the Divisions there to separate Corps (Region) status within his District. After the five Sydney Corps and Newcastle, Canberra became the District's seventh Corps. At the same time, two Canberra men, Dr David Henchman and Mr Frank Hull, were appointed District Staff Officers in charge of the local Corps.

The ACT split away from New South Wales District as a separate Sub-District on 29 June 1979. Major-General Colin Gurner became the first Commissioner and Mr Rod Strahan first Sub-District Superintendent. At that time there were 116 members spread across six Divisions (three adult and three Cadet). Full District status was achieved in June 1988. At that time Colonel Peter Tedder was the Commissioner and Philip Langdon was District Superintendent.

In its relatively short time apart from New South Wales, the ACT has proved itself as keen as any other District. Teams from Canberra have competed in all the national Brigade/Operations Branch first aid championships, adult and Cadet, since the separation from New South Wales in 1979. The District achieved its first significant competition success in January 1996 at the national Cadet competitions in Hobart, where the ACT team became the national champions. A contingent of ACT members later went on duty in both Canberra and Sydney for the 2000 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Later still the ACT Divisions gave outstanding service during the disastrous Canberra bushfires in January 2003.

12. The Priory in Australia

In Australia, the Order of St John is a federal body, that is it unites the six State and two Territory branches of St John Ambulance Australia within an over-arching organisation known as the Priory. The Priory's full title is "The Priory in Australia of the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem".

The Priory in Australia was instituted in 1946. It took over from an earlier body, the Commandery of the Commonwealth of Australia (Exclusive of Western Australia), which had been established in 1941 to bring together five of the six State St John Ambulance branches. Western Australia opted not to join this Commandery, preferring to wait until it was granted one of its own. When the Commandery of the Commonwealth of Australia was upgraded to Priory status in 1946, Western Australia joined the new federal body as a Commandery within the Priory.

The head of the Priory of Australia is the Prior, traditionally the Governor-General. By 2004 there had been 14 Priors, all but one Governors-General. In 2004 the Prior was Lt.-Gen. Michael Jeffrey, who had been appointed in 2003. The heads of the six State and Northern Territory branches are called Deputy Priors. In the States they are traditionally the State Governors and in the Northern Territory the Administrator. In Western Australia the Deputy Prior is also called the Knight Commander or head of that State's Commandery. In the Australian Capital Territory the head of the local branch is called the Patron and is generally a prominent local citizen.

The Priory is governed by the Prior under the authority of the Sovereign Head. Its chief governing council is called the Priory Chapter. This body comprises all members of the Order living in Australia who are of and above the grade of Commander, that is Bailiffs, Knights and Dames and Commanders. In addition the Chapter has a quota of members of lower grade, Officers and Serving Brothers/Sisters, nominated by the State St John Councils. The Chapter generally meets once a year, usually during the annual Priory conferences, held on rotation in the State and Territory capital cities in June in the week closest to the festival day of St John the Baptist, 24 June. The Priory conference concludes with the annual Chapter meeting and Priory church service.

Membership of the Order must be earned. It is granted for distinguished service, usually over many years, to people who work for the Order through the various branches of St John Ambulance Australia. Admission into membership of the Order does not follow automatically from membership of the branches. The criterion is always distinguished service.

In Australia there are five grades of membership of the Order. From lowest to highest they are: Serving Brother/Sister, Officer Brother/Sister, Commander Brother/Sister, Knight/Dame and Bailiff/Dame Grand Cross. Each membership grade has its own insignia of rank, consisting of a metal Badge of the Order in differing sizes and colours according to grade. Promotion from a lower to a higher grade depends on further distinguished service, usually over many years.

The Priory headquarters is in Canberra, where it moved in 1968 after 22 years in Sydney. It occupies a purpose-built building at the corner of Canberra Avenue and Dominion Circuit in the suburb of Forrest a kilometre south-east of the Commonwealth Parliament. The Priory's executive head is called the Chancellor. In 2004 this was Professor Villis Marshall, an eminent surgeon who had earlier been the Director of Training and then the Chief Commissioner for St John Ambulance Australia. He had held the position since 2000 and was the sixth Chancellor in succession. The head of the Priory secretariat is called the Priory Secretary and also the Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Office of St John Ambulance Australia. In 2004 this was Mr Len Fiori, who came to the position in 2002 and was the seventh Priory Secretary in succession.

The Priory is managed by a Board of Directors, which consists of the following officers:

- the Chancellor
- the Vice-Chancellor (deputy to the Chancellor)
- the Chief Commissioner (head of the Operations Branch)
- the Director of Training (head of the Training Branch)
- the Receiver General (chief financial officer)
- the Hospitaller (responsible for the Jerusalem Eye Hospital)
- the Chair of Community Care (the Branch responsible for social welfare projects)
- the Priory Secretary
- the Chairs of the eight State and Territory St John Councils.

In addition to the Board of Directors, the Priory has two other officers:

- the Director of Ceremonies, who is responsible for the Priory's ceremonies and rituals
- the Librarian, who is responsible for the Priory's library and museum collections and matters concerning the Order's history and traditions, and is usually a member of the management committee of the St John Ambulance Australia Historical Society.

In the States and Territories the St John Councils are responsible for managing the Order's many enterprises. The councils comprise representatives from the local Training, Operations and Community Care branches, Jerusalem Eye Hospital delegates, fund raising auxiliaries, the State ambulance services, business organisations and other interested bodies.

13. Creating the Priory in the 1940s

Creating the Priory was a 30-year process which came to completion soon after the end of World War II. The first steps had been taken in 1916, during World War I, when there was an attempt to call an interstate conference of the State St John Ambulance branches. This came to nothing, but in 1920 the Brigade Commissioner in New South Wales, Dr Thomas Storie Dixson organised a conference of the Brigade Districts in Melbourne. Delegates attended from Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia and Western Australia. The next year a second interstate conference, again in Melbourne, led to the setting up of an interstate "Central Council" for St John Ambulance in Australia.

The Central Council held its inaugural meeting in Sydney in June 1925 and elected Dr T.S. Dixson as its president. It was an unbalanced, unrepresentative body because it was dominated by New South Wales and Victoria, who between them sent seven of the ten delegates. Of the other three, one came

from each of Queensland, South Australia and Tasmania, while the Western Australians refused to have anything at all to do with it. With no income and no authority over the State branches, the Central Council was powerless to do anything other than talk and write letters. After its 1925 meeting, it met only once again, in Adelaide in 1928. It planned to meet in Canberra in 1931 but never did. It disbanded two years later, in 1933. By that time Dr Dixson and a number of its other leading figures, most of whom were elderly, had died.

Although the Central Council had proved a failure, moves to create a federal St John Ambulance structure in Australia continued. Two important developments here were the visits to Australia of two official delegations from the British headquarters of the Order at St John's Gate in London. The first, led by Sir John Hewett, toured Australia in 1928–29, inspecting each of the St John Ambulance Association Centres and St John Ambulance Brigade Districts in turn. The second, in 1935–36, was by Col. (later Sir) James Sleeman, the Chief Commissioner of the Brigade Overseas (that is, the Brigade outside Britain). Like Hewett seven years earlier, Sleeman visited all the States and held discussions with all the Association Centres and Brigade Districts.



Above: Sir John Prescott Hewett, leader of the Grand Priory's delegation to Australia in 1928–29.



Right: Col. (later Sir) James Sleeman, Chief Commissioner of the St John Ambulance Brigade Overseas 1930–50, who conducted a long tour of inspection in Australia and New Zealand in 1935–36.

On the "hidden agenda" for both Hewett and Sleeman was to see if the Australian St John Ambulance branches were ready for a Commandery of the Order, that is a self-governing national St John Ambulance structure. Such Commanderies were already being established in Canada, New Zealand and South Africa, and so the Order's leadership in London wished to know if the Australians, too, could manage their own national organisation for the Order. At various meetings with Hewett and Sleeman the Australians had indicated that they wanted a Commandery. Despite the failure of the Central Council, support among the Australians for a national, federal St John Ambulance organisation was growing.

After Sleeman's tour in particular, the State's corresponded with each other over the possibility of creating a Commandery. Various types of Commandery were discussed, including one to be called "The Commandery of South-Eastern Australia" and consisting of just South Australia, Tasmania and Victoria. In the end the negotiations between the States resulted in a Commandery that included all five eastern States but not Western Australia. The Western Australians thought themselves too remote from the Eastern States and feared that the two largest St John branches, New South Wales and Victoria, would dominate the Commandery. They wanted a Commandery of their own, so refused to participate in the new federal body, which is why it had the long, quaint name "Commandery of the Commonwealth of Australia (Exclusive of Western Australia) of the Venerable Order of the Hospital

of St John of Jerusalem". The four words in brackets emphasised the Western Australians' separateness.

The Grand Priory of the Order at St John's Gate finally approved the constitution for the Commandery on 24 October 1941, and then on 11th November gave permission for the Commandery to begin operating. The Governor-General of Australia, Lord Gowrie, who had been actively involved in the negotiations to establish the Commandery, became its "Knight Commander" or head. The person chosen as the "Commandery Lieutenant" or chief administrator was Sir Hugh Poate, a leading Sydney surgeon who had been the Brigade Commissioner in New South Wales for the past 15 years, since 1925.

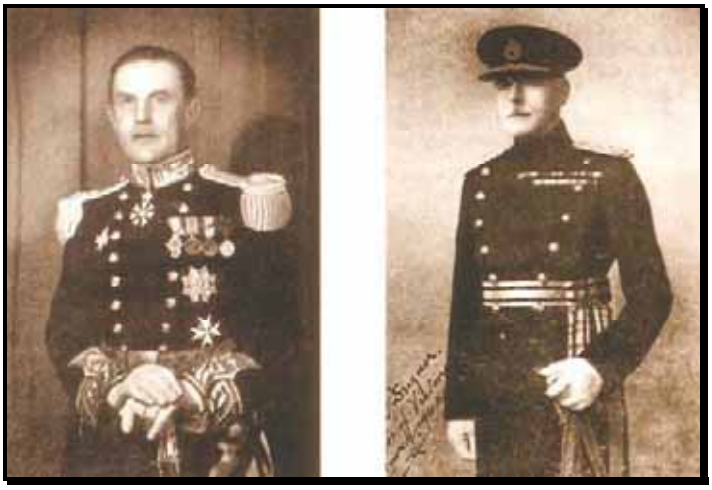




Left: Lord Gowrie, the first Knight Commander of the Commandery of the Commonwealth of Australia (Exclusive of Western Australia).

Right: Sir Hugh Poate, Commandery Lieutenant of the Commandery of the Commonwealth of Australia (Exclusive of Western Australia) 1941–46 and then Sub-Prior (Chancellor) of the Priory 1946–60.

The first meeting of the Commandery took place at Admiralty House, the Governor-General's Sydney residence, on Monday 19 January 1942. These were perilous times: Australia was facing its gravest crisis. World War II had been raging in Europe and North Africa for almost 2½ years; and the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour in Hawaii only six weeks earlier had brought the war into the Pacific. Australia itself came under direct threat of invasion only four days after the Commandery meeting when the Japanese army invaded Australia's Territory of New Guinea on 23rd January. As Australians worried about the prospect of invasion they flocked to St John Ambulance to learn first aid. Within a year the number of people learning first aid almost doubled. The number joining the St John Ambulance Brigade also nearly doubled; and by the end of the war in 1945 total membership had passed 8,400 (compared to 4,500 at the outbreak of war in 1939). This was the highest level of membership achieved up till then.



Left: Lord Wakehurst (left), Governor of New South Wales and second Knight Commander of the Commandery of the Commonwealth of Australia (Exclusive of Western Australia). In 1966 Wakehurst, by then Lord Prior of the Order, revisited Australia to lay the foundation stone of the Priory headquarters building in Canberra.

Right: Sir Winston Dugan, Governor of Victoria and the first Prior of the Australian Priory of the Order of St John.

The wartime achievements of both Association and Brigade in training huge numbers of citizens in first aid and performing many thousands of public duties were spectacular. This convinced the Grand Priory of the Order that the Australian Commandery should be raised to Priory status, along with the

Commanderies of Canada, New Zealand and South Africa. Both the Priory in Australia and the Commandery in Western Australia came into official existence on 18 September 1946. That was the day when the Grand Prior, Henry Duke of Windsor, signed the warrants to transform the Commandery of the Commonwealth of Australia into a Priory and to create the Western Australian Commandery. The actual ceremony marking the inception of the Priory took place in a special meeting of the Priory Chapter in St Andrew's Cathedral, Sydney, on 6 March 1947. A similar ceremony for the Commandery in Western Australia took place seven weeks later in Perth on 23rd April.

14. The St John Cadet movement

Introduction

The St John Ambulance Cadet organisation is largely integrated with the system of adult Operations Branch Divisions. The Cadets wear uniforms similar to adult Branch members' (though they haven't always done so). They are organised into local Divisions like the adults. They work under the same regulations. They are trained in first aid; and they go on public duty accompanied by adult members. At the same time the Cadet movement is a creature apart — part of a larger body but also an organisation in its own right, with its own structure, rules, procedures and activities.

Founded to be a recruiting field for the adult Divisions during the 1920s, 30s and 40s, the Cadet Divisions soon took on a life of their own, then during the years following World War II the Cadet organisation emerged as a national youth movement. It is a movement that not only helps its own members but serves the wider community as the St John Ambulance contribution to youth development in Australia.

By the beginning of the twenty-first century the Cadets comprised almost half the entire Operations Branch membership. In the late 1960s their numbers had peaked at 7,584, but after that there was fairly steady decline. During the 1990s–early 2000s the number has fluctuated between about 4,000 and 4,880. Those figures were small by comparison with the membership of the leading youth organisation in Australia — Scouts and Guides — in which some individual States would have more members than there were St John Cadets nationally. Quality, however, is as important as size; and in that respect young people joining the Cadet movement can be sure they will be productively engaged in personal development and community service.

Origins in England

Cadet Divisions began forming in England during 1922, after the Brigade "At Home" (i.e. in Britain) developed regulations for their establishment. Much earlier than that, in the two or three years following 1903, a "Juvenile Section" of the Sutton-in-Ashfield Division in Nottingham, England, had proved that teenagers could administer first aid as effectively as adults.

The first British Cadet Divisions were as follows: Gateshead Cadet Nursing (girls') Division, near Newcastle in the far north-east of England, formed in May 1922; Aldershot Cadet Ambulance (boys') Division, in Hampshire, June 1922; Shipley Cadet Nursing Division, in Yorkshire, June 1922; Rochdale Cadet Ambulance Division and Rochdale Cadet Nursing Division, in Lancashire, November 1922. After that, many Cadet Divisions formed. By late 1928 the number of Cadet Division members had reached 4,000 in the Brigade "At Home" and there were another 460 in the Brigade "Overseas".

The first of the overseas Cadet Divisions formed in 1925. These were the Bombay Cadet Ambulance Division in India in October that year, closely followed by the Bombay Cadet Nursing Division.

Australia's first Cadet Divisions

Australia's earliest Cadet Division formed about three years after the Cadet movement was established in England. This was the Glebe Ambulance Cadet Division, which was registered in Sydney on 19 December 1925. After that, few if any Cadet Divisions formed until the 1930s. Many Cadet Divisions then followed in the 1930s and 40s.

The following list shows the first Cadet Divisions known to have formed in each District. (The list may not be entirely accurate, because the records on the formation of Cadet Divisions have not always survived in some States/Territories.)

New South Wales — Glebe Ambulance (1925), North Sydney Nursing (1930), Marrickville Nursing (1931), Darlington Nursing (1931), Balmain Nursing (1931).

Victoria — Richmond Ambulance (1930), Williamstown Ambulance (1933), Geelong Ambulance (1943), Footscray Ambulance (1945), Sunshine (1947).

Western Australia — Fremantle Ambulance (1936), Perth Metropolitan Nursing (1944), Fremantle Nursing (1945), Osborne Park Ambulance (1949), Perth No. 1 Ambulance (1951).

South Australia — Prospect Ambulance (1936), Norwood–St Peter's Ambulance (1936), Port Adelaide Ambulance (1936), Adelaide No. 1 Nursing (1937); Woodville Ambulance (1937).

Tasmania — Hobart No. 1 Ambulance (1936), Hobart No. 1 Nursing (1936), Launceston Nursing (1941), New Norfolk (1941), Launceston No. 2 Nursing (1942).

Queensland — Milton Ambulance (1953), Milton Nursing (1953), Mount Isa Nursing (1953), Nundah Nursing (1954), South Brisbane Nursing (1954).

Australian Capital Territory — Canberra–Reid Ambulance (1960), Canberra–Lyneham Nursing (1960).

Northern Territory — Darwin (early 1960s), Casuarina (early 1960s), Adelaide River (1979), Katherine (1981), Sanderson (1981), Howard Springs (1981).





Above: Members of Thebarton Cadet Division, Adelaide, 1953.

Left: Members of Glebe Cadet Division, Sydney, 1947.

These pictures show the differences between Cadet uniforms in the different States up till the end of the 1960s.

The *General Regulations* and the *Cadet Handbook*

The rules and procedures of the St John Ambulance Australia Operations Branch are set out in detail in the ***General Regulations***. This book usually deals with the Cadet movement thoroughly in its last chapter. For example, in the 2003 edition, "Cadets and Juniors" is not only the fourteenth chapter of 14 but is the longest.

The "Bible" for the Cadet movement in Australia, however, is the ***Cadet Handbook***. Produced by the Australian Headquarters Staff of the Operations Branch in Canberra, it was first published in 1978. After that another four editions had been produced by 2004 — in 1987, 1995, 1997 and 2003. The manual contains advice on every matter in which a Cadet or the Cadet's parent is likely to need information.

The *Cadet Handbook* sets out the standard of behaviour that Cadets are expected to conform to. Referred to as the "code of chivalry", this has eight major points — matching the eight points of the Maltese cross Badge of the Order. These major points are: (1) to serve God, (2) to be loyal to the Sovereign and to Officers, (3) to observe the mottoes of the Order, Pro Fide- (For the Faith) and Pro Utilitate Hominum (For the Service of Mankind); (4) to be thorough in work and play; (5) to be truthful and just in all things;

(6) to be cheerful and prompt in all that the Cadet does; (7) to help the suffering and the needy; and (8) to be kind to all animals.

Proficiency badges and the Grand Prior's Badge

Cadets spend part of their time studying for assessment in a series of "Proficiency Certificate Subjects". Those who can demonstrate they have reached a certain level of performance in a subject are awarded a badge that is worn on the uniform. There is wide choice of subjects, with the list including 39 by 2004. Cadets who earn 12 Proficiency Certificates over a period of at least three years are awarded the Grand Prior's Badge, which is worn on the sleeve of the uniform for as long as the Cadet (or later adult) remains an Operations Branch member.

The Grand Prior's Badge is the highest award a Cadet can achieve. The British headquarters of the St John Ambulance Brigade At Home (i.e. in Britain) introduced it in 1931 to encourage Cadets to achieve excellence across a broad range of endeavours. The first three Grand Prior's Badges were awarded in 1933. Two went to Ambulance Cadets in England (D. Anderson and W. Lloyd of Slough) but the third was earned by an Australian — Marion Higgins of the Marrickville Cadet Nursing Division. Since then over 1,600 Australian Cadets have earned the Grand Prior's Badge. By 2004 almost 70 a year were being awarded. Despite being awarded so frequently, it is always a mark of distinction for the Cadet receiving it.

Special service certificates for 1000 hours of duty

Special Service Certificates for 1000 and more hours of public duty are another prestigious award. Like members of adult Divisions, Cadets go on public first aid duty and perform various other community service tasks. As in the adult Divisions, a useful measure for the amount of work done is "hours of duty". Many Cadets make a major commitment to such work. To acknowledge this, the Chief Commissioner introduced the Special Service Certificate in 1978. It is awarded to Cadets who complete at least 1000 hours of duty. If completed in a year, as sometimes happens, that means an average of about 19.2 duty hours a week.

The first Cadet to receive the certificate was Kerry Anne Clarkson of South Australia in 1978. Since then over 200 other Cadets have received the award. A small number Cadets have received it for the remarkable achievement of 2000 hours in a year. At least one Cadet, John Ward in New South Wales, went further, achieving 2500 hours before becoming a Cadet Leader in 1992. During the 1990s–early 2000s an average of nine Cadets received the 1000 hours award annually.

Australian Headquarters Staff

When sufficient Cadet Divisions had formed, each State/Territory appointed a Staff Officer to be responsible for its Cadet activities. This position is generally known as State/Territory Officer Cadets". Eventually, as Australian Brigade/Operations Branch Headquarters began placing more emphasis on the Cadet movement, a Chief Officer for Cadets was appointed to the national staff. (The national or Australian Headquarters Staff consists of the Chief Commissioner, Chief Superintendent, Chief Ambulance Officer, Chief Medical Officer, Chief Nursing Officer and Chief Officer Cadets.)

The first appointement as Chief Officer Cadets was made in 1975, and since then seven people have held the position. They have been: Ashley Mason (Victoria), 1975–80; Richard Bluck (Victoria), 1980–84; Joan Patterson (Victoria), 1984–93; Lynne Dansie (South Australia), 1993–99; Lynne Panayiotis (Victoria), 1999–2002; Andrea Williams (acting, Western Australia), 2000–01; and Kieran Brown (Tasmania), since 2002.

National Cadet first aid and nursing championships

Competitions in first aid have been an important part of Brigade/Operations Branch life since the organisation's earliest years in England. Similarly, competitions at the Divisional, Regional and State/Territory levels have been a part of the Cadet movement since its earliest years.

National Cadet first aid and nursing competitions began in Australia 1968. Ambulance Cadets contested the first aid competitions and Nursing Cadets the nursing competitions. The first aid and nursing competitions alternated year by year — Ambulance Cadets in the even years, Nursing Cadets

in the odd years. Combined Cadet competitions began in 1985 with mixed teams competing in first aid. Cadet Leader competitions began in 1975.

The national competitions are generally held in conjunction with the national Cadet camp in January. In the period 1975–2001 almost 150 members qualified to wear the coveted "National Champion" badge on the right sleeve of their uniforms.

Cadet camps

Camping has long been a feature of life in Cadet Divisions. Together with weekly Divisional meetings, training for proficiency badges and regular public first aid duties, camping quickly became an important fixture of the Divisional calendar. Camps are held at all levels — Divisional, Regional, State/Territory, National and International. In time most State/Territory Brigade/Operations Branch organisations acquired their own permanent Cadet campsites. Examples are the Hugh Poate Camp at Blaxland in the Blue Mountains of New South Wales (named after the first Chancellor of the Australian Priory) and the Douglas Donald Camp at Yarra Glen in Victoria's upper Yarra Valley (named after the longest serving of Australia's eight Chief Commissioners up to the year 2004; Donald served for 10 years, 1969–79).

The camps serve many purposes. They are both recreational and educational, providing an important means of teaching new skills. They provide a venue for first aid competition. They help foster among those attending a sense of pride in belonging to a national organisation. They also encourage lasting friendships to form, and occasionally lead to interstate as well as intrastate marriages. As well as all that, they also provide plenty of fun.

Growth, decline and recovery

National Cadet statistics in Australia have only been kept since 1956. The reason for gathering and publishing the statistics is to indicate what membership trends are. The critical measures here are "strength" (the number of members) and "establishment" (the number and type of Divisions). Such measures help the leaders at all levels plan ahead and develop recruiting and training strategies.

When the national Brigade statistics collection began in 1956 there were 4,880 Cadets in 191 Divisions. Sadly, as in most voluntary organisations (for example Scouts and Guides), the figures show that the Cadet movement in Australia has declined since peak membership of 7,584 Cadets in 321 Divisions was reached in the late 1960s. The low point in membership came in 1990, when there were 4,128 Cadets in 206 Divisions. Happily, a recovery took place during the 1990s, and by the end of the decade there were 4753 Cadets in 232 Divisions.

A change of emphasis, and the Australian Youth Council

For most of its history, the Cadet movement has been intended as a recruiting ground for adult Divisions. Much effort by Brigade/Operations Branch leaders went into encouraging the Cadets who reached 18 to continue on into membership of adult Divisions. Many Cadets did join adult Divisions, but the great majority didn't. New careers, further education and changing interests took most away. During the 1990s this situation prompted the Cadet leadership at District and national levels to rethink the purpose of the Cadet movement. The result was a shift in emphasis away from regarding the Cadet Divisions as a recruiting ground for adult Divisions and towards turning Cadet Divisions into a service to youth.

The new view of the purpose of Cadets resulted in the formation of the Australian Youth Council in 1997–98. Its purpose is to provide policy advice to St John Ambulance Australia on all matters affecting youth. Its membership comprises two representatives from each of the State/Territory Operations Branch organisations. Members must be aged between 15 and 25. They need not be Cadets, though most are or have been recently. (If they are not currently Cadets, they are most likely to be Cadet officers.) The council meets twice a year, usually at the national Cadet camps in January and during the annual Priory Conferences in June. The period of office for membership is one year.

Beginning a new century

By the beginning of the twenty-first century, the Cadet movement in Australia was in reasonably good health. Nationally, the membership numbers were holding steady at over 4000. They still had

a long way to go to reach the high point of the late 1960s and early 70s, when national strength had risen above 7000. But there was every chance they would climb back.

As an observer on the sidelines of the Cadet movement for the past 25 years, I am confident that the Cadet movement still has a long life ahead of it because of the excellent service it provides for Australia's youth. In an uncertain era of youth job opportunities and the erosion of family values, Australia's youth needs something like the St John Ambulance Cadets. Its "selling points" include these:

Fun: Cadets follow an interesting program of varying outdoor activities, camping, competition and first aid duties at exciting events.

Friendship: Joining Cadets is an excellent way of meeting new people, making lifelong friends and enjoying fellowship.

Vital skills: Cadets learn to save lives and relieve suffering; and on public duty they treat casualties where their life saving skills are needed.

Useful work: Cadets add value to their communities. They make a difference for the better wherever they do their work.

Purpose in life: The Cadet movement gives its members a sense of order and habits of self-discipline. It brings structure and direction into their lives, and provides a well-proven framework for personal growth and development.

Careers: The Cadet movement is an outstandingly successful 'college'. Its members are learning all the time. They acquire valuable training in social and job-related skills. These prepare them well for further education and later careers, especially if these are in the health and community welfare sectors.

15. Milestones

As the Priory advanced further into the decades following World War II, it assumed increasingly greater importance in the affairs of the State St John bodies. Under the leadership of successive Priors, Chancellors and Priory Secretaries, it had the effect of both standardising and unifying the effort of the Order's St John Ambulance foundations in the States. This could be seen in many directions.

The creation of a Brigade/Operations Branch Priory-level Australian headquarters staff of Chief Commissioner, Chief Superintendent, Chief Officer Cadets and Chief Medical, Ambulance and Nursing Officers was one advance. The production of Australian editions of the Brigade's *General Regulations* was another. Other advances were the adoption of a standard black and white uniform and the institution of annual interstate first aid competitions. Together these gave the Brigade/Operations Branch a sense of unity and common national purpose it had not previously enjoyed.

The Association/Training Branch also gained greatly from having one national forum rather than six separate, isolated local State/Territory bodies. A generation after its formation, for example, the Priory was serving as an effective administrative facility that made possible the production of a series of first aid and health care text books. Chief among these was *Australian First Aid*, the first edition of which the Priory published in 1969. A manual conceived and produced in Australia, it was the Australian successor to Surgeon-Major Peter Shepherd's original 1878 *Aids for Cases of Injuries and Sudden Illnesses* and the later *First Aid to the Injured.* Without the unifying national structure of the Priory, the six separate State Association Centres (Training Branches) might never have got to the point of agreeing on what such a text book should contain.

The creation of the Priory was certainly a great federal milestone for the Australian St John Ambulance branches, but it was not the only milestone and others lay ahead.

One way of viewing St John Ambulance history in Australia since World War I is to see it as a prolonged attempt to establish and refine a federal structure especially suited to Australia's experience of vast distances and widely scattered population centres. The major milestones in this evolutionary process include these:

1. The interstate conferences in the early 1920s leading to the ultimately futile attempt 1925–32 to establish a St John Central Council for Australia.

2. The visits to each of the six State St John branches during the 1920s and 30s of the two delegations from the Order's London headquarters at St John's Gate — Sir John Hewett's in 1928–29 and Col. James Sleeman's in 1936–37.
3. The creation in 1941 of the Commandery of the Commonwealth of Australia (Exclusive of Western Australia).
4. The upgrading of the Commandery to full Priory status in 1946.
5. The establishment of State St John Councils during the 1950s and 60s to bring together the various fractions of the State St John branches under the same executive umbrella.
6. The opening in 1968 of the purpose-built national Priory headquarters in Canberra, the Australian capital city.
7. The restructuring of the Priory in 1987, with its consequent adoption of new names ("St John Ambulance Australia", "Training Branch", "Operations Branch") and the creation of the Community Care Branch.
8. The Priory review and subsequent restructure of 1997–98, which led to a "corporate" model of Priory governance and the establishment of the Priory's Board of Directors.
9. And finally the first meeting in Australia of the Order's international Grand Council, which took place at the Priory headquarters building in Canberra in May 2003. The Grand Council had come into being in October 1999. Composed of representatives of the eight national Priories of the Order — Australia, Canada, England, New Zealand, South Africa, Scotland, the United States of America and Wales — the Grand Council replaced the former Grand Priory and has its headquarters at St John's Gate, London.

16. Achievements

In an organisation like the St John Ambulance Australia Operations Branch, which has a proud record of community service extending back over more than a century, it is hard singling out any one achievement as being more important than all the others.

Ever since the Brigade's first public duty in Australia, in Sydney on "Federation Day", 1st January 1901, people wearing the St John Ambulance uniform have been helping their fellow Australians in moments of personal distress. Operations Branch members are on public duty at very many community events — pop concerts and music festivals, street parades and marches, carnivals and agricultural shows, and sporting events both large and small — in every Australian State/Territory in every week in every year. With over 9,400 uniformed volunteers spread across 400 Divisions and annually treating over 83,000 casualties during more than 632,000 duty hours, the Operations Branch members on duty are saving lives every week.

The St John organisation therefore accumulates a tally of many thousands of achievements every year. Among all these, however, some stand out. The Hobart bushfires in 1967, the Brisbane floods in 1974, the "Ash Wednesday" bushfires in South Australia and Victoria in 1983, the Sydney bushfires in 1994 and the Canberra bushfires in 2003 were all major natural disasters during which St John Ambulance volunteers gave distinguished community service.

For sustained service, however, the Sydney Olympic and Paralympic Games stand out as the greatest public duty that St John Ambulance has every performed in Australia. The 2000 Games and Paralympics really began with the Torch Relay. Starting off at Uluru in Central Australia on 8th June, the relay took 100 days to wend its way across the nation, reaching the main Olympic Stadium just before the climax of the Games opening ceremony. The Olympics occupied world attention for the next fortnight, and then a fortnight after that came the Paralympics. St John Ambulance Australia provided the first aid services during all three phases of the Games — Torch Relay, Olympics and Paralympics. Each event was the biggest ever. Altogether St John had 3,092 volunteers on duty. (This was 28% of total national Operations Branch membership.) During the Torch Relay St John members were on duty at 174 locations. They then worked 1,150 separate duty shifts at the Olympics and another 345 duty shifts for the Paralympics over the two month period the Games continued. In all they treated over 15,000 casualties and worked more than 124,000 hours. It was truly a gold medal performance!

Below: A St John Ambulance volunteer on duty during the opening ceremony of the Sydney Olympic Games, 14 September 2000.





Above: The 200-strong St John Ambulance contingent leading the medical volunteer section of the Volunteers' Parade past the Sydney Town Hall two days after the end of the 2000 Olympic Games.

At the other end of the scale are the many thousands of unofficial duties that the Operations Branch members perform, often out of uniform and off duty. The Operations Branch official history, *The Zambuks* (2002), tells about many of these. Some of them stand out above all the others. My favourite is a story about Kevin Young, a former Superintendent of the Lake View and Star Division in Western Australia, who in 2002 became his State's chairman of the St John Ambulance Community Care Branch. His story, which is on page 290 of *The Zambuks*, says much about the St John style and the people who perform their community service through the Order of St John. It goes like this:

> One case of which I was very proud involved a 53 year old miner called Ted, who was badly injured in an explosion in the Great Boulder mine near Kalgoorlie. He had been boring holes in the rock deep in the mine to take an explosive charge when he drilled into some un-detonated explosive. The end of his three-foot drill then burst into several fragments that hit him like shrapnel. He suffered terrible injuries. His left foot was blown off 4 inches above the ankle; his right leg was shattered and later had to be amputated below the knee; he suffered an enucleated right eye (that is, eyeball torn from socket) and a penetrating wound to his left eye from an embedded foreign object and was left with only 15% eye sight; he suffered puncture wounds to his abdomen, chest and face; he had a flail chest with a collapsed left lung; his right ear was torn off; and when I got to him was in deep shock. I treated all his injuries quickly and strapped him on the stretcher, elevating his feet as high as possible. On arrival at the lift stopping place I put the blanket and pillows on the floor because the lift cage was very small, then tipped Ted upside down, climbed up on top of the cage, tied a rope to the winding cable and stood on top of the cage while we were hauled 409 feet to the surface. When we got there I travelled with Ted in the mine ambulance to the Kalgoorlie Hospital.
>
> Ted survived and 20 years later while I was working at the Royal Perth Hospital he was admitted there for eye surgery. I visited him before he went to theatre. He was so pleased to see me he hugged me and said he'd never forgotten how I'd saved his life. He subsequently regained 75% of his eyesight. With his worker's compensation pay-out he bought some rental flats in Esperance and was able to live on the income. He died only 18 months ago, more than 30 years after the accident that nearly killed him. At the time of the accident the mine management wanted to nominate me for a Royal Lifesaving Medal but I vigorously declined because I'd only been doing my job.



Kevin Young wearing his robe of a Knight of the Order.

Kevin Young's treatment of Ted the injured miner was in the grand Hospitaller tradition. He was only one St John Ambulance first aider, however. There have been many, many thousands just like him since St John Ambulance first set up shop in Australia in 1883. Together they have quietly been notching up achievements like Kevin Young's somewhere in Australia on almost every day ever since. And so it will continue for as long as the Order of St John does.

17. References and further reading — a very short list

The following list of references for further reading contains only some of the works available for each topic. Most of those listed are readily obtainable.

The Crusades

- Jonathan Riley-Smith (editor), *The Oxford Illustrated History of the Crusades* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1995).
- Many modern encyclopaedias, most of which now come in CD (compact disk) editions, include helpful summaries of the Crusades, for example, *Encyclopaedia Britannica 2003*. A shorter summary appears in the *World Book 1998 Multimedia Encyclopedia*, also on CD.

The Knights Hospitaller

- Jonathan Riley-Smith, *Hospitallers: The History of the Order of St John* (The Hambledon Press, London, 1999).

The Sovereign Military Order of Malta and the *Johanniter* Orders

- Guy Stair Sainty, *The Orders of Saint John* (The American Society of The Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem, New York 1991).
- H.J.A. Sire, *The Knights of Malta* (Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1994).
- Desmond Seward, *The Monks of War: The Military Religious Orders* (Penguin Books, Middlesex, UK, 1995.

Origins of The Most Venerable Order

- Jonathan Riley-Smith, 'The Order of St John in England, 1827–1858', article in Malcolm Barber (editor), *The Military Orders: Fighting for the Faith and Caring for the Sick* (Variorum, Ashgate Publishing Ltd, Aldershot [UK], 1994). In Australia there is one known copy of this very important article in the Priory Library in Canberra.
- Ian Howie-Willis, *A Century for Australia: St John Ambulance in Australia 1883-1983* (Priory of the Order of St John in Australia, Canberra, 1983).
- E.D. Renwick, revised by I.M. Williams, *A Short History of the Order of St.* John (The Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem, St John's Gate, London, 1971 [sixth edition]). Although dated, this book is still a helpful introduction to the Order.

Origins of the St John Ambulance movement

- Ian Howie-Willis, *A Century for Australia: St John Ambulance in Australia 1883-1983* (Priory of the Order of St John in Australia, Canberra, 1983).
- Ronnie Cole-Mackintosh, *A Century of Service to Mankind: A History of the St. John Ambulance Brigade* (Century-Benham Ltd, London, 1986). This book was the official centenary history of the St John Ambulance Brigade in the UK, but it makes few references to Australia.
- N. Corbet Fletcher's, *The St John Ambulance Association: Its history and its Part in the Ambulance Movement* (St John Ambulance Association, London, no date [but probably 1929]). The only known Australian copy of this very useful publication is in the Priory Library in Canberra.

The St John Ambulance movement in Australia

- Ian Howie-Willis, *A Century for Australia: St John Ambulance in Australia 1883-1983* (Priory of the Order of St John in Australia, Canberra, 1983).
- Ian Howie-Willis, *The Zambuks: The uniformed first aid volunteers of St John Ambulance Australia 1901-2002* (St John Ambulance Australia, Canberra, 2002).
- Valerie Grogan (co-ordinator), *St John Ambulance Australia Operations Branch Handbook for Presidents* (St John Ambulance Australia, Canberra, 2004).

The Australian State/Territory St John Ambulance branches

As well as the two national histories of St John Ambulance in Australia by Ian Howie-Willis cited above, there are seven State/Territory commemorative histories of St John Ambulance produced by State/Territory branches of the organisation. These are as follows:

Northern Territory

- Bill Wilson, *To Be Faithful, True and Brave: A History of St John Ambulance in the Northern Territory from 1928 to 2002* (St John Ambulance [NT], Casuarina, Northern Territory 2003).
- Pat McQuillen, *"Saved Any Lives Today?" A History of St John Ambulance in Alice Springs NT* (St John Ambulance [NT], Casuarina, Northern Territory, 2004).

Queensland

- Murdoch Wales and John Pearn, *First in First Aid: The History of St John Ambulance in Queensland* (Department of Paediatrics and Child Health Publishing Unit of the University of Queensland [at the Royal Children's Hospital], Brisbane, 1998).

South Australia

- Ian Howie-Willis, *South Australians and St John Ambulance 1885-1985* (St John Council for South Australia, Adelaide, 1985).

Victoria

- Amelia F. Field, *The Order of St John in Victoria: Our First Hundred Years* (St John Ambulance Australia [Victoria], South Melbourne, 2004).

Western Australia

- Ian Howie-Willis, *St John Ambulance and Western Australia: A Centenary Anthology 1892-1992,* (St John Ambulance Australia [Western Australia] Inc., Perth, 1992).
- Edith Khangure and Ian Howie-Willis, *Reflections and Directions: A History of the Commandery of the Order of St John in Western Australia 1947-1997* (St John Ambulance Australia [Western Australia] Inc., Perth, 1997).

Histories of particular Australian Operations Branch Divisions

- Ian Howie-Willis, *The Zambuks: The uniformed first aid volunteers of St John Ambulance Australia 1901-2002* (St John Ambulance Australia, Canberra, 2002). This official centenary history contains short histories of about 40 Divisions from all Australian States/Territories.

In addition to those in *The Zambuks*, a growing number of histories of individual Divisions has been published in recent years. A notable example of the genre is:

- Ruth G. Donaldson, *Following a Nursing Star: A History of St John Nursing in Perth 1913–1963* (St John Ambulance Australia [Western Australia Inc], Belmont, Western Australia, 2003).

The Cadet movement

- Ronnie Cole-Mackintosh, *A Century of Service to Mankind: A History of the St John Ambulance Brigade* (Century-Benham Ltd, London, 1986). This book gives a general account of development of the Cadet movement in the UK.

- Ian Howie-Willis, *The Zambuks: The uniformed first aid volunteers of St John Ambulance Australia 1901-2002* (St John Ambulance Australia, Canberra, 2002). This book has a separate chapter on the development of the Cadet movement in Australia.
- Barry Price (editor), *St John Ambulance Australia Operations Branch: Cadet Manual, 3rd Edition* (St John Ambulance Australia, Canberra, 1997).
- Shirley Dyson (editor), *Cadet Handbook, New Edition* (St John Ambulance Australia, Canberra, 2002).

The St John Ambulance Australia Historical Society

- In addition to the above reference works, there is the annual journal of the St John Ambulance Australia Historical Society, *St John History: Proceedings of the St John Ambulance Australia Historical Society*.
- In the three editions of *St John History* issued up until May 2004 there were a total of 25 historical research papers by 14 different writers on various aspects of St John history in Australia.
- *St John History* is therefore becoming an important resource for Cadets and Cadet Leaders working on the "Knowledge of the Order" proficiency badge. The best way of gaining access to the journal is to join the Historical Society, the annual subscription for which is $10 in 2004–05.

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