



Retired Ambulance Association Victoria Inc.

The RAAV Wrap

March 2024 Vol. 1



President's introduction and welcome

Well since my last report a lot has happened. Your committee has been basically engaged in not only performing the day-to-day duties required to run our organisation but working to expand and enhance our organisation. My thanks for all the work they are performing.

The major storm experienced recently left many so very affected, not only with damage, loss of power and other services. If any members are in need of talking to someone, please contact us. We do care and we can help.

Summer has finally passed, although there is a small legacy of warm days and nights left for us. I do hope that you all have managed to cope with the very warm days in the best way you can. I myself was fortunate enough to be interstate when the hot weather presented and for this I am grateful. While away interstate I managed to meet up with other currently serving paramedics. Good to hear their experiences and feelings regarding their workplaces.

I look forward to catching up with some of you at our luncheons and until then please stay safe and keep a lookout for our brothers who may not be doing so well.

Greg

Secretary's report

I do hope everyone is in fine fettle. My wife Chris and I have recently returned from New Zealand, an annual pilgrimage which indulges me in my interest of old American cars where we attended the AmeriCARna festivities in New Plymouth on the North Island. We also visited Napier on the east coast of the North Island so that Chris could have some time in the most pristine Art Deco in the Southern hemisphere. When we returned my wife entered hospital to have a long overdue hip replacement surgery. All went well and we are enduring the recovery phase.

Speaking of surgery, I do hope those of us on the sick list find some comfort in these readings, albeit somewhat light, we are aiming for a little entertainment, some humour and some memorabilia, so enjoy.

Jim Ballard

Purchasing Officer

We have a large supply of jackets which we're keen to distribute. Please get in touch if you're looking for this item. While we're talking about winter wear, we also have a supply of navy jumpers which look smart for the colder months approaching.

We were approached by some members to investigate the supply of a dress style shirt and tie for wearing at service funerals. We went to 3 suppliers and the cost from each was around \$41-\$45 plus embroidery of our logo on each arm made them around \$65 per shirt, there is a limited quantity which must be ordered if we were to go ahead. A dress tie would add another \$20 to the cost. At present this is seen by the committee as being cost prohibitive but it's still on the agenda. Please let us know if you would like to possess a dress shirt. Please bear in mind that a dress navy pant would need to be worn with this shirt which would be purchased by the wearer.

Any items required, please contact Les Wood on 0418 457 104 for discussion regarding uniform purchase or go to the website retiredambulancevictoria.org.au for a purchase order and a list of our supplies.

Les Wood

Welfare & Wellbeing

We are almost at the end of March as we provide this update on Welfare support within RAAV.

Over the Christmas period, apart from enjoying frequent trips down the hill for a swim in the bay and with the assistance of Graham Douglas our Membership Officer and Web Maven, two welfare databases were developed and are being constantly modified as we collect relevant data.

- A generic database collects predetermined information which is largely statistical in nature. Similar in some respects to the RAFE Peer Support data collection process. This database will be available on our updated website.
- The second database has more text information of a confidential nature. Access is restricted accordingly to key selective RAAV Executive Members only.

We have approached Ian Hunt the acting Senior Manager Peer & Pastoral Care about RAAV Welfare Liaison people being included into the AV Peer Support refresher training. All indications are that Ian is comfortable with our members being included into this program.

These discussions are ongoing, with Ian currently hiking with Tony Pearce on "*Tony's Trek Side by Side 2024, to Everest Base Camp, Nepal*". (<https://esf.com.au/tonystreksidebyside/>) Tony has used these events in the past to raise the awareness of and canvass donations, to support mental health and wellbeing of Victoria's emergency service workers.

Jenny McGuirk, a voluntary Chaplain for North & West Metro, a RAAV member has offered to assist with conducting Psychological First Aid Courses under the Emergency Ministries banner for our members.

More information about these courses to follow. In interim it's important we establish how many of our members would like to:

- a. assist with the RAAV Welfare Liaison role or
- b. would like to participate in either the Peer Refresher training or the Psychological First Aid course.

To register your interest, please contact Steve Mulligan either directly on 0418 331 984 or send an email to vicepresident@retiredambulancevictoria.org.au.

Summer 2023-2024 has thrown up some interesting challenges, with floods, storms & fires. No one appears to have escaped the impact of the resulting damage which has been spread throughout the State. We have received feedback regarding some members being subjected to flooding, trees falling and cutting power to their homes especially in the Dandenong's. Others, being under 'stay or go' warnings with the fires in the Wimmera Region.

As we navigate our way out of the aftermath of these events, we should be mindful that we all react differently. The feedback we have received is that our affected members and their local communities have managed to emerge relatively unscathed.

That said, we know from past experiences that following these types of situations a small event can trigger and cascade into something bigger. Should any RAAV member and/or the immediate family have any concerns please do not hesitate to seek assistance no matter how trivial you may consider the situation to be.

Over the past few years RAAV has developed an expanding support network support network. The RAAV Welfare Co-ordinator can also assist with access to Chaplaincy support.

It is well recognised that the best support is often provided informally by "mates", neighbours current work or former colleagues this includes RAAV District Co-ordinators, Welfare Liaison Officers, RAFE & AV Peer Support Responders.

Welfare Liaison

Frank Abela, the RAAV Liaison Officer for Gippsland has conducted considerable research into to current non-government agencies (NGA) providing support services to the communities of Central, East and South Gippsland. Frank's research indicated that this type of support is in fact available by the same agencies throughout Victoria in times of need.

Frank spoke to the following Gippsland agencies:

- Returned Services League (RSL) Victoria
- St Vincent De Paul Society Victoria
- Salvation Army Doorways Community Support
- Australian Red Cross.

Should any RAAV Member, in fact any member of the general community require assistance, a referral can be sort and made by any of RAAV's Welfare Liaison Officers directly to any of the above agencies.

The whole process is strictly confidential for anyone who is referred to an agency and is consistent with the RAAV Privacy Policy. (Refer to RAAV website to view Privacy Policy).

Should any RAAV Member require any additional information about these NGA's and their services, you can contact Frank Abela directly via mobile 0407 744 656 or through RAAV Welfare Co-ordinator.

Steve Mulligan

RAAV Vice President & Welfare Co-ordinator.

E. vicepresident@retiredambulancevictoria.org.au

M: +61 418 331 984

Webmaster

The New Website has had work commenced on Feb 26, using the current website Menu as the starting point.

A new look for the site is planned as well as features making it easier navigate & to find the information you need.

The Member application & Merchandise order forms will be able to be completed online.

At this time the body of work planned does not include membership payments nor will payments for Merchandise purchases not be available this decision was made due to cost of the implementation of this feature.

These payments will still need to be processed via your banks EFT facility.

It is anticipated that the new site will be "live" during the second quarter of the year.

As mentioned earlier relevant pages on the current website are being maintained as a source of information for members.

So please, use the website your primary source of RAAV information regarding District Meetings etc, you can always email committee members if you still can't find an answer to your query.

Since the last newsletter was circulated there has been quite a bit of back of house activity to facilitate administration of the RAAV organisation.

Commencement of Web site construction was planned for early 2024, meanwhile & in preparation....

- Committee email addresses have been updated to RAAV domain.
- Dropbox implemented for sharing & storage of documents to ensure security of information.
- Both of these changes will facilitate smooth transition when Committee members change roles or leave the position.

The Current website has been culled of non-useful pages & the Menu updated.

- The contacts page has been updated with the new email addresses.
- Photos have been updated to reflect the inclusive nature of the organisation.
- a **Bulletin Board** page created & maintained. • a **District Meetings** page was created & is maintained along with each Coordinator's contact details, you will find the date & time of each meeting as well as a link to a map showing the location of the venue.
- **In Remembrance** page maintained.
- a **Documents page** created for ease of access to.....
 - the Constitution, Merchandise order form, Membership application form, Expense Claim form and the Newsletter archive, with more documents coming soon,

Software

- **Zoom** accounts created to facilitate more frequent committee meetings when and if required.
- **MailerLite** software was trialled for four weeks & subsequently implemented. Issues of security with sending PDF documents via email has necessitated this change. Documents or information mentioned in emails is now made available on the website just click on the link provided in the email you receive.
- MailerLite is free account for up to 500 members & 12,000 emails per month can be sent. All this results in zero emails hard bouncing ie being permanently undeliverable, while some still do, a soft bounce when a member's mailbox is full.

- Cheers, **Graham DOUGLAS**

RAAV Infirmary

We're wishing John Waters a speedy recovery from his serious back injury, get well soon John.

We also are wishing John Head a speedy recovery from his knee replacement surgery.

Chris Ballard is also on the recovery list having undergone a total hip replacement, get well soon Chris.

Also on the sick list has been Peter Dent. We hope you're on the mend now Peter.

Please let us know if any other member is on the sick list and we will include it in future editions

Departed Colleagues.

Please see our web site for departed members list.

We pay homage to their dedication to ambulance and we send our sincere condolences to their family and friends. May they all rest in peace.

New Members

We welcome the following new members to RAAV, we hope you enjoy all the friendship and camaraderie which our association is known for; Jenny Mc Guirk. Tom Rose, Denise Montgomery, David Sullivan, Lyle Whitten, David Temple & Ian Ramsdale

Letters to the Editor

from Graham Douglas

Hi Jim

New member, & RAAV's first Rural & Remote Registered Nurse, Denise Montgomery (#1534) has written a brief biography.

"Born not that long ago, but ages ago, in Melbourne, moving to Bendigo when I married. Having long desired to become a nurse, I moved to Wodonga to study at LaTrobe Uni when my kids were teenagers. Melbourne bore the brunt of my frustration with nursing - I worked at different hospitals, learnt the specialities and did not have the patience to stay and build my experience. I wanted more challenges. The ultimate test of my skills was Alice Springs Hospital where I became intrigued with the harsh realities of offering first world medicine to a third world culture. Ultimately spending many years as a remote area nurse, I maxxed out every skill I had ever learnt, plus some more.

Eventually the threatening environment became overwhelming and I returned to Bendigo. After a few years I am probably mostly recovered from the experience, and occasionally reflect on some of the incredible jobs I handled. I now enjoy peace, comfort and the company of a few special people.

I embraced the opportunity to join RAAV because I like to see that people have lives after their career, that we all did make a difference and can now enjoy simple company of like minded people who don't balk at our stories.



Denise & I at the recent Central Vic District meeting on Feb 13

From The Museum

Hello Jim,

Thought I would pass in compliments to you and the rest of the RAAV administration in regard to the RAAV upgraded web page, Very impressive! And a great step forward. Also the feedback coming to me is pleasing in that regard.

I think you are hitting on what the members are looking for.

Take care mate, keep up the good work,

Pete Dent.

RAAV Feedback

Members' comments, suggestions and enquiries are encouraged, please send them in to secretary@retiredambulancevictoria.org.au and we will endeavour to forward a direct reply or with your permission print enquiries in the next newsletter.

31/01/2024 (Reprinted with permission)

Afternoon Jim,

Thought it worth letting you know.

Your additional information forwarded to members relative to the welfare of paramedics not literally involved with RAAV.

It sure has paid off. I am just home from attending the funeral of Laurie Blick. There were multiple attendees from far & wide, which in turn saw many old acquaintances regenerated - if only with a short chat but in the least with a firm "Hand Shake".

I was surprised how many of the past student population made contact in recalling appreciation on how older members came into helping the early structuring of their careers.

Did have the opportunity to thank Tony Walker for both his help in extending my long career with the Service to the age of 78 - plus for what he had undertaken while at his past levels, toward the benefits of RAAV memberships & Branches.

Your idea is worthy of continuation - I see it as good PR for RAAV & many other past/present paramedics.

Catch up,

Ben Wright.

I came across the RAAV newsletter and found it to be a good read.

You asked for suggestions for a possible name for the newsletter. I put forward the name "CHATTERBOX". Just one of many you may like to consider.

Regards, Bernard Goss

We are scouring AV for the latest happenings which might interest our readership. If you have any snippets please send them along to secretary@retiredambulancevictoria.org.au and we'll put them in the next edition.

We have been asked to look back at some of the historical pieces of equipment which has long been retired from ambulance use but remains in many of our memories as a frontline treatment option.

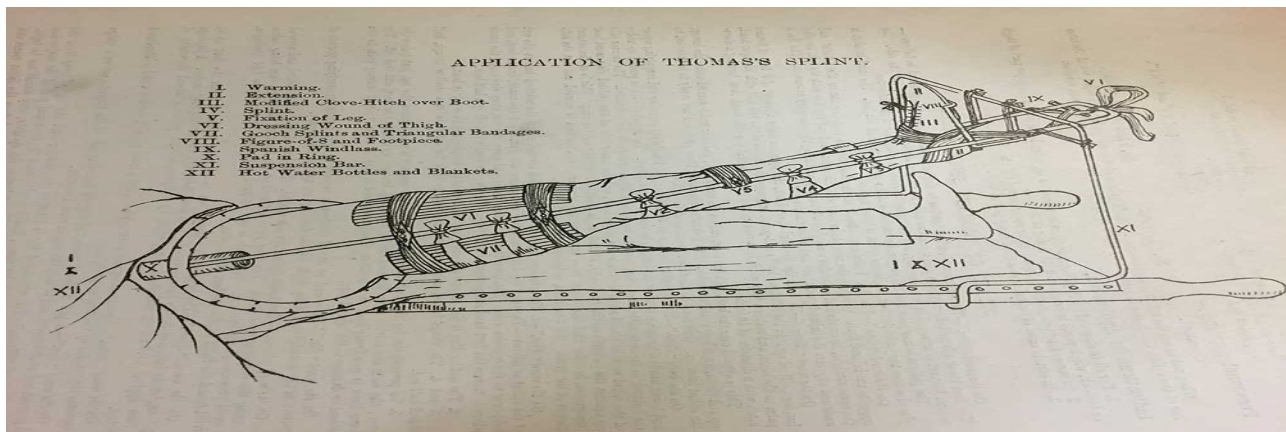
A revolution in treatment: the Thomas splint

Thursday 1 December 2016 | [Louise Bell](#) | National Archives (United Kingdom) |

Ever since seeing a demonstration of how to use it, in a reconstruction of a Casualty Clearing Station in Heaton Park, I have been interested in the Thomas splint. This splint revolutionised the manner in which men injured in the First World War were treated.

Introduced in 1916 to the Front, the Thomas splint reduced the rate of mortality from fractures (of the femur in particular) from 80% to 20%, in 1918. ¹ The splint was originally designed by Hugh Owen Thomas, considered the father of orthopaedic surgery in Britain, with the intention that it would stabilise a fracture and prevent infection. However, it was not fully appreciated until his nephew, Robert Jones, introduced it for use in the war.

Thus far, I have only uncovered one thin file relating to the Thomas splint in our collections. But the information it contains is rich. There is a wonderful diagram of the Thomas splint in use, which relates to an instruction leaflet of how to properly apply it.



Application of the Thomas splint (catalogue reference: AIR 2/136)



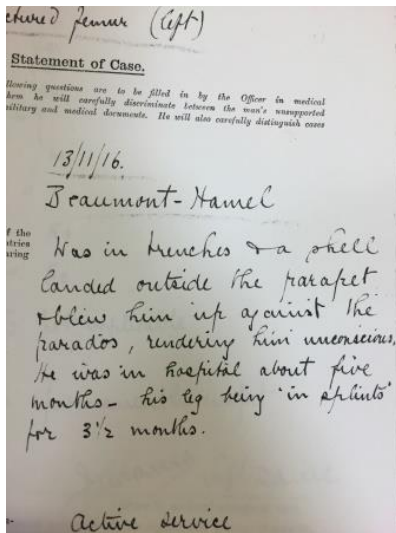
Instructions for application of Thomas's splint (catalogue reference: AIR 2/136)

The instructions for application contain the following suggestions as to when it should be applied:

1. For all fractures of the thigh bone, except where there is an extensive wound in the upper part of thigh or buttock, which would interfere with the fitting of the ring
2. In severe fractures about the knee-joint or upper part of the tibia.
3. In certain cases of extensive wounds of fleshy part of thigh.

As Robert Jones states in his book *'Notes On Military Orthopaedics'* these types of wounds need patience and time, which the Thomas splint can help with. He disparages those practitioners who do not take care to achieve accurate alignment, as they get nervous after a number of weeks and interfere with what he refers to as 'delayed union' – which can lead to a permanent disability. ²

Ideally, a team of three is required to apply the splint (an operator and two assistants) but it could be undertaken by just two members of the team, if necessary. There are 12 different stages in the application of the splint, which all serve to make the patient as comfortable as possible – including the last stage of applying hot water bottles. The main goal of this is to be able to move the patient without causing him pain, or any further damage to the injured part.



George Henry Prentice (catalogue reference: PIN 26/4144)

If you look through our Ministry of Pension files relating to those awarded for the First World War (in [PIN 26](#)) and search for 'femur', a number of men who suffered from fractured femurs are represented. One such man, Private George Henry Prentice, was in the trenches at Beaumont Hamel when a shell landed outside the parapet and blew him against the wall, rendering him unconscious. Within all of this, his left femur was also fractured. The most interesting part of his file is the section which states that his leg was 'in splints' for three and a half months. It doesn't indicate specifically that this was a Thomas splint, but it is a possibility.

Further reading of his file shows that George did end up walking with a slight limp after his treatment. However, this is a much better outcome than that which other men had to deal with – there was no loss of limb or death in this situation. George suffered this injury in November 1916, which links nicely with the idea that treatment for fractured femurs had started to improve by this point

An interesting insight into an integral piece of ambulance equipment which was utilised in the field from the 1960's through until the 1980's when it was replaced with the Donway Splint. A Thomas Splint is available to look at for interested parties at the Chas Martin OAM, Ambulance Museum in Bayswater.

Regional Reports

Metro East

Around 10 turned up to the Wheelers Hill Hotel. Our President Greg Wood was in attendance and spoke briefly to the group. Also our Chaplain Tom came along which we were grateful for his attendance. Ian Smith and Garry Becker came along as first timers to have a look and assess whether they would like to become members, we hope to see them again soon. A quieter than normal meeting with David Hadj apologising for his absence as he had a family funeral to attend

Our next meeting is Thursday 16th May 2024 at the Wheelers Hill Hotel we hope to see you and any potential newcomers there.

Les Wood.

Metro North

The latest Metro North lunch was held on Wednesday 7th February at the Darebin RSL. RAAV Secretary Jim Ballard and his wife Christine joined 13 regular Members and partners, as well as Chaplains Robyn Ferroff and Jenny McGuirk.

We hope to keep increasing our numbers this year, so let your colleagues know about our lunches. All Ambulance personnel, working and retired, are welcome.

Our next lunch will be on Wednesday 1st May 2024 at 12.00 at the Darebin RSL, (Bistro), 402 Bell St Preston.

Col Evans - Coordinator

Gippsland East

The Gippsland East group met at the Bairnsdale RSL on the 6th March for a pleasant luncheon. There were 10 in attendance with one potential new member coming from Orbost, we hope to catch up with Jim Barnett again soon. We were saddened to see that Keith Payne was on the injury list after tangling with his camper trailer and lacerating his hand, get well soon Keith. We also had some unable to attend due to contracting Covid 19, it's still around and interfering in our life.

We look forward to meeting up again on the 15th May, so come along and bring some new chums with you .

Jim Ballard

Central & South Gippsland

The Central and South Gippsland group met on the 14th March at a new location the Morwell RSL. Last time we met we felt that the Morwell Bowling Club had become a little too noisy for our delicate aging ears to hear people speak. The venue seemed fine with no objections. Our welfare liaison Frank Abela addressed the group of 20 with regard to his initiative of sourcing alternate avenues to seek assistance if any of our members are in need of assistance. Steve Mulligan will address this further in his column.

I'm pleased to announce that Neil Akers has agreed to take over as our new Coordinator. Neil has had a breadth of leadership roles throughout his career and is well suited to guide the group in a new direction. Well done Neil and thank you for stepping up.

Our next meeting will be at this same venue on the 23rd May, We hope to see you there....**Jim Ballard**

Metro South

We met as usual at Steeples in Mornington for our regular luncheon, we were fortunate enough to have 28 members turn up and enjoy each other's company.

We conducted 3 raffles on the day and Kevin Saddler (who was inducted as a Life Member last meeting) turned up and won a voucher \$30 voucher. The other lucky recipients were David Calder, Ben Ellis and Alf Greaves.

I gave a reminder about the open day at the Ambulance Museum on the 14th. April

Our next meeting will be again at Steeples Mornington on 25th June at 12:00 o'clock, we look forward to your company

Bryan Cass.

Metro West

Hi Jim, It was lovely to meet you today. Always good to put a name to a face.

Hoping you had an enjoyable day. We also had the honour of facilitating the awarding of Life Membership to Daryl Wells. Daryl has had a distinguished career and is a popular well known character within AV and with his outside interests. Daryl was presented his Life Membership by RAAV Secretary Jim Ballard and Daryl was supported by his family



Georgie Hall - Coordinator

Ballarat District



It was good to see so many people turn out to the meeting with 18 in attendance, some old faces and some I have just become acquainted with. My wife Judy drove me up the Western Highway as I had recently had a knee replacement surgery. A good lunch and chat was had by all where we through around some ideas for recruiting some younger members. It was good to see our Past Secretary, Ian Cameron there along with Chaplain Jim who has agreed to be the Welfare Liaison for the group. Also Neil and Anne Akers dropped in on their way home from South Australia.

Our next meeting will be held on June 10th at the Golf House Hotel, I hope to see you all there. I have stepped in as interim coordinator but as a committee member it is essential that we encourage somebody local to step up and take on this position. Please give me a call if you would like further details on this.

John Head

South West District

The first meeting for the South West region for 2024, was held at Mac's Hotel in Mortlake on Monday 4th March.

10 members/partners attended, along with AV Chaplain, Lynne Carter. 5 apologies were received.

Two lovely ladies from the Mortlake Historical Society accepted my invitation to give an insight into Mortlake's history. They informed us of some 'salacious' goings on with a couple of notables. It seems that Mortlake was a 'hot bed' of scandal in the early 1900's.

Members who had relieved at the Mortlake ambulance station, contributed their stories as well.

Welfare Officer, Ray Lougheed, advised us of members who are currently unwell. We wish those affected, a speedy recovery.

The next meeting for the SW region, will be held at Rafferty's Tavern, Warrnambool on Monday 3rd June.

Rhonda Oliver
SW Convenor

Ambulance Historical Society Victoria Inc.



*Ambulance
Victoria*

*Chas Martin O.A.M.
Museum*

Open Day

When: Sunday the 14th of April between 10:00 AM and 2:00 PM.

LOCATION: 1/55 Barry St Bayswater.

Entry: **Entry is free!**

WHAT YOU WILL see:

- a fabulous short presentation and video tour show every hour from 10am to 2 pm. covers a lifetime of ambulance work.
- ambulance AND OTHER EMERGENCY SERVICE vehicles, documents, uniforms, medical equipment, early record books, original old telephones and radios, and documents going back to the early 1900's.
- at cost, freshly made Devonshire tea with either tea or coffee. Other light refreshments available
- Ambulance books and items for sale at special Open day prices We look forward to seeing you and your family. Bring some friends

Look out for the museum staff wearing the yellow tabards for help and information and enjoy the day. There is so much to see!

Please visit our Facebook page for further information.

Facebook [Ambulance Victoria Chas Martin OAM Museum](#)

Email ambulance.historical@outlook.com

Phone 0419619430 and leave a message.



Caravan and Motorhome Club.

The new dates for the RAAV Caravan and Motorhome Group are from Monday the 15th April until Monday the 22nd April. Unfortunately all the sites previously put on hold have now gone back to the general public. There are a few smaller sites available, but these are only for mid-week, not the weekend.

At present we have five sites booked and one cabin. Just to let people know how we are now selecting caravan sites: - We have allocated numbers to places, put the numbers into a "Hat", and then draw out a number. I have, at present, 13 numbers allocated to 13 locations. For others that didn't participate in the last lot of location names then we are always more than happy to add further names to the list.

Neil and I travel to the selected towns to check out the caravan parks available there, check out any features, activities and places to eat, then report back on the selected caravan park. If anyone has a particular favourite and thinks that all the amenities and facilities are great, then we are willing to check out availability and book that park in the area that was selected.

Neil and I have now travelled to Benalla and Ballarat to attend the RAAV lunches and spread the happy news about our caravan group. We aim to visit every region in this first 12 months. Look out for us at one of your lunches. 😊

Thanking you and happy caravanning.



Anne Akers.

Home is where my caravan takes me.

Wanted – Buy – Sell –Swap –Give Away.

Do you have that special item which you feel could be repurposed? If you answered yes, then send it in to us at secretary@retiredambulancevictoria.org.au and we'll include it in our next edition

Hi Jim,

As per yesterday's phone call, here is the information about the Poker Machines, so are you able to include this Ad in the Newsletter.

Many thanks.

Geoff Quennell

Mildura.

FOR SALE

2 One Arm Bandit Poker Machines.

1: Table Top, 4 Reel "Nevada" Poker Machine, Original, and Excellent working condition. \$1600.00

2: Free Standing, 4 Reel "Regal Super 22" Poker Machine, Very good original condition, Excellent Working condition. \$2000.00

\$3000.00 for both Machines.

These type of Machines are hard to find and harder to buy, as mostly they are kept in a shed somewhere.

Certainly good working condition, Mechanism has been adjusted to Stop Prize Payout, but can easily be reversed.

Please contact me for further information and Photos on these Machines,

Geoff Quennell on 0427 248 932



Neil hangs up the uniform after 48 years of service

February 21, 2024 | in [AV Community News](#)

When Neil Burden became a paramedic “by chance” in 1975, he never could have imagined he’d spend almost five decades working in some of Victoria’s most challenging paramedic roles.

Neil, 81, recently retired from Ambulance Victoria following a remarkable 48-year career which saw him work across some of ambulance’s most esteemed services including the Mobile Intensive Care Ambulance (MICA) unit and Air Ambulance.

“I wasn’t looking for a career as a paramedic; it wasn’t something I ever aspired to,” Neil said with a smile.



Neil treating a patient early in his career as an “Ambulance Officer” (left). Neil farewelled colleagues at MICA 6 after retiring in January 2024 following 48 years of service (right).

However, the instability of a rural recession proved to be the catalyst that prompted Neil to seek a career change following short stints as a farm worker and mechanic.

“I thought being an ‘Ambulance Officer’ – as paramedics were known as at the time – was all about selling subscriptions to farmers. But my wife was a nurse at a local hospital and one of her co-workers’ partners was working at ambulance, so I thought maybe I’d investigate it,” he said.

“I remember walking into the local Leongatha ambulance branch. They said they had no vacancies, but three weeks later I ended up getting a call for an interview. The rest, as they say, is history.”

What followed for Neil was a rigid training process including years of study and on the job experience – a career shift which helped him develop a tenacious work ethic.

This held him in good stead as he embraced the ever-evolving changes for paramedics with technology and clinical advancements over the years.

Starting with the South Gippsland District Ambulance Service in 1975, Neil studied and went out on road for the first time, quickly earning his three stripes on his uniform which marked his qualification as an Ambulance Officer.

He honed his patient-facing service work over the next decade, before transferring across to Ambulance Service Melbourne (ASM) when rural ambulance merged.

Neil said stability and a clear career path with room to grow was what attracted him to his new venture, but the daily challenge of the unpredictable work was what kept him on his toes right through to retirement.

“It’s the unknown – you never know what is going to happen next, or what challenge you’ll be presented with,” Neil said.

“The ability to do something for people when they’re in dire straits and make a difference in someone else’s life is something I always enjoyed.”

It wasn’t long before Neil chased the thrill of his next challenge, working and studying to become a MICA paramedic in November 1988.

He reflects fondly on his time stationed out of MICA 1 where he regularly performed higher duty roles but said the nature of the work also presented traumatic and complex cases.

“I feel very fortunate to have worked where I have. There’s no doubt that MICA has always been regarded as a frontrunner in clinical practice,” he said.

“You treat someone and deliver someone to the hospital as best you can, and the reality is you never hear from them about what happens next.

“I know there’s been people who I’ve revived from cardiac arrests who have gone on to live a healthy life, go back to work, go back to their families. It doesn’t happen to everyone, but to a lucky few. We do the best we can.”



Final checks: Neil Burden closes the nose compartment that houses the oxygen supplies.

Retired MICA paramedic Neil Burden checks his Cessna 404 (also known as a ‘Cessna Titan’) while working on Air Ambulance’s fixed wing aircraft in 1996.

In 1993 his paramedic career reached new heights yet again when he became a Paramedic Air Attendant on-board Air Ambulance’s Rotary and Fixed Wing aircraft.

From the role of Paramedic Air Attendant, he climbed the ranks to become Flight Coordinator – a title he held for six years.

“When I started with Air, the police were providing us with the helicopter at the time, so it was quite common to do a police officer work as well. That was a bit of excitement, suddenly being involved in car chases and that type of thing,” he said.

Having rotated through Rural Ambulance, Peninsula Ambulance, Metropolitan Ambulance Service, Air Ambulance and MICA, Neil said the changes he saw over the duration of his career were remarkable.

“There was just constant updating, constant re-learning, constant training. The role of the paramedic has evolved enormously, it was almost unrecognisable at the end of my career,” he said.

“The good that paramedics can do now is enormous. Clinically, I can only look at its development in a positive light.”

While there are many career highlights for Neil, there are cases with tough outcomes that he said would always stick with him, too.

Neil credits his love for physical exercise, often alongside or in the water, as one of the ways he helped to balance the physical and mental demands of working in an emergency service.

Neil’s last shift out on road was during the challenging COVID period in 2021, with his official retirement earlier this year from his role out of MICA 6 as a single responder.

“I liked the work and just never thought that far ahead,” Neil said.

“I like going to work, I like the people I work with. The relationship between paramedics at the same depot can be quite deep.”

AV MICA paramedic and colleague Keryn Walker described Neil’s length of service as “magnificent”.

“Neil finished service at MICA 6 as a single responder MICA paramedic. Neil was a fantastic mentor to many MICA paramedics who had the pleasure of working with him,” Keryn said.

“He has great wit, remarkable knowledge and did it all with a smile on his face. We are so proud to have worked with him, and mostly call him our friend.”

Neil was congratulated and farewelled by his team at MICA 6 in January this year and said his parting advice to fellow paramedics was to appreciate everyone and never stop learning.

“You can always learn something from the paramedic next to you, whether they’re straight out of University or they’ve been around for years,” he said.

“I think it’s also important to understand that everyone will make mistakes. Acknowledge your mistakes, correct what you can and never do it again. Everyone is human and mistakes will happen.”



Ambulance Historical Society Victoria Inc.

Chas Martin OAM - Ambulance Victoria Museum.

Invitation to Record ASV Service Details- Service Honour Roll.

History Preservation of Victorian Ambulance Service Personnel.

Our Museum, and official publication **The Beacon**, are often contacted for information regarding **former serving ASV personnel**. Also, often museum patrons visiting enquire of persons who have served. It is believed that previous records of this information no longer exist. **AHSV INC.** is considering implementing an initiative to facilitate this basic information by colleague's consent.

**** Authorised persons may register on behalf of deceased former Ambulance colleagues.**

ASV Colleagues

The information will be contained in an alphabetical **Honour Roll** register, and will be available for public access, details will also be archived in our Victorian State Ambulance Service History, **held at the C.M. Ambulance Victoria Museum**, Bayswater Vic. It is considered a sad omission that so many dedicated and valued years of service in Ambulance to the people of Victoria by former ASV personnel is not recorded and recognised, and available for information, gratitude, and respect that accompanies, albeit so well deserved.

All previous vocations of Ambulance, front line, technical, admin, personnel that have the distinction of having contributed to the internationally acclaimed pre-hospital status that our Ambulance Service has today been recognised. Inclusive of **ASV/AV ACOs**, **CERT Members**, and **RANS (Remote Area Nurses)** who have completed in excess of 3 years continuous service.

It is envisaged service information sought and be recorded on the register would simply encompass; **NAME – DATES OF SERVICE.- LOCATION SERVED- QUALIFICATIONS (OF THE TIME)- AWARDS- NOTABLE OR COMMENDABLE SERVICE- PIONEERING OF AMBULANCE- (i.e. Air Ambulance) (Other Departments) (Disaster participation)**

An email proforma outlining all relevant information, including **consent, privacy, confidentiality**, conditions, and methodology of the initiative is available for perusal and/or participation.

Note: What **will** show on the AHSV Service Honour Roll is your Ambulance career service detail **only** that you have provided to us.

What **will not** show are your personal contact details of any description, these will only be recorded under our strict privacy criterion.

**** Long Term** Ambulance Service volunteers who have contributed to the Service, its attributes, and personnel wellbeing are most welcome to register.

To compliment this initiative participating members will also be offered a formal attractive A4 frameable **"Honour of Service Certificate"**, laminated, and posted out. * conditions apply.

To register your details or interest, email: **Barb Dent, coordinator** vintambos@bigpond.com for return proforma.

Ralph V Casey ASM

Curator



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