

BROADSIDE

Summer & Fall 1988

Twin 'W' First Aid Squad

Gwen A. Rigg, a Charter Member of Twin "W", wrote this history for us from her home in Clearwater, Florida. Jaye Clayton helped us prepare the updating of Squad History.

During the Second World War, there had been First Aid Stations set up in Penns Neck, Dutch Neck and Princeton Junction to act in case of an air raid. Two nurses, Ruth Rigg and Libby Salkin, taught First Aid to local citizens and stockpiled blankets, food and medicine in the Community Club on Route 1 (now Techne, Inc.). They did not go to accidents or otherwise perform First Aid services as we know them. The project ended when the war ended.

In 1970 West Windsor Township depended on the First Aid Squads of Princeton and Hightstown for any emergency.

Princeton First Aid & Rescue Squad (PFAARS) and Hightstown First Aid received a yearly donation from the Township, and from individuals. Some West Windsor men joined the squads.

As long as West Windsor remained a rural community with a minimum of people, the system worked. When the farms were sold for development, the population increased by leaps and bounds. A strain was put on all municipal services: police, fire companies, first aid. Sometime between 1970 and 1971, the members of the Princeton Junction Volunteer Fire Co. #1 decided to add a First Aid Unit to their station, as an added service to the community and to encourage donations.

For instruction, they turned to a former member of the fire company, Eugene "Bud" Rigg, who belonged to PFAARS and was an American Red Cross First Aid instructor. "Bud" enlisted the help of Bob McCloskey of PFAARS and Bill Reed and Bill Ainsworth, organizers of the East Windsor First Aid Squad and members of the New Jersey State First Aid Council, as co-instructors.

The public was invited to take a First Aid Course with the Firemen at the Princeton Junction Firehouse. No one anticipated the response! Men and women from all parts of the Township answered the invitation. Three groups were formed. The instructors rotated teaching, one group one night and another group another night. This teaching method worked very well.

Somewhere along the line, the groups developed an

interest in forming a separate First Aid Squad, centrally located and not affiliated with any other organization. Discussions about an unaffiliated First Aid Squad versus a First Aid Squad for the Fire Company required many meetings. Neither the Fire Company, who had originated the idea, nor the PFAARS, who would lose donations and members to a new squad, was enthusiastic about the separate First Aid Squad for West Windsor. There was also the question of financing, training and administering such a project.

Many of those interested in the First Aid Squad were not interested in firefighting and the women in the classes would not be able to join the fire company so the question was therefore put to the residents of West Windsor as to whether they would support a West Windsor First Aid Squad. The majority approved and vowed to support the Squad.

Organization then began in earnest. Trustees and officers were elected. "Bud" Rigg was elected captain; Buck Osborn and Joe Tunning, lieutenants. A charter was written proclaiming: "Twenty-four hour First Aid care for the residents and businesses of West Windsor Township regardless of 'color, creed or race.'" The Charter members donated money toward "starting up" costs, e.g., legal expenses, petty cash and most importantly, an ambulance.

When Amwell Valley Ambulance Corps of Ringoes heard that Twin "W" needed an ambulance, they offered their old ambulance. "Bud" and his lieutenants decided to buy it. On June 2, 1972 Twin "W" became the proud owners of a 1964 Oldsmobile 98 ambulance. It still had to be paid for but it gave the Squad identity.

The ambulance stood in the Rigg driveway and was used for training purposes. Tom Prickett did the necessary body work and painted it Gold and White with a black stripe, which the members decided would be the Squad colors. Members also selected a shield. It was hard to believe but the ambulance was ready!

The American Legion Post #76 offered their meeting hall on Washington Road for monthly Squad meetings. Here the "growing pains" that accompany every new organization were suffered through. At times the arguments were hot and heavy. President Walter Kozachek had his hands full. Plans for a Squad house were discussed. West Windsor Township offered the old blacksmith shop in Dutch Neck behind the Town Hall as a temporary shelter for the ambulances.



Charles Holman was the Township Committeeman in charge of the Police and Fire Companies. He took the Squad under his wing. Mayor Firman added his endorsement. Twin "W" was beginning to be accepted as an integral part of the Township. After First Aid classes were over, some of the people decided that active duty was not for them. They were the start of the Twin "W" Associates, an organization similar to an Auxiliary, but with both men and women members. They organized to support the Squad by helping with fund-raising endeavors such as tailgate bake sales, rummage sales, etc. They stuffed envelopes, made cravats (bandages) and served refreshments at Squad functions.

The Cadet Corps became an important part of the Squad. Cadets were not allowed to ride on calls except under senior members and very rigid rules. They cleaned the rig and helped replace used medical supplies.

The Captain called drills just about every week — drills in bandaging, splinting, lifting and whatever else he thought the members needed practice in. He was a hard taskmaster. The only acceptable First Aid was correct First Aid with Tender, Loving, Care.

At last in August 1972 Twin "W" was ready to roll. The Police were notified. All the duty crew had to do was wait. The first call came in August 21, 1972 and everything fell into place. After the first few moments of jitters, the crew went about its work as if it were a drill. Twin "W" had answered the call!

A lot has happened since that day in 1972. In 1978 the Squad House was built on Everett Drive. The Squad today owns 3 ambulances, as well as a rescue boat and many pieces of sophisticated extrication equipment.

Training is much more complicated today. As of November 1987, the New Jersey First Aid Council and the Department of Health requirements came under one title. In order to ride the ambulance, Squad members must be trained Emergency Medical Technicians. This training may be completed in a series of modules — about 3 months of training over a period of time. Whatever the training, First Aid People are the same: Devoted to giving the best First Aid or emergency treatment possible with lots of TLC.

A few of the original members are still active with the Squad. Charter members and officers are listed below (shown in the photograph). Their contribution to one of West Windsor's greatest assets should not be forgotten.

West Windsor's Twin "W" First Aid Squad Officers, Members and Cadets — early 1973

Top Row: (L to R) Tomalene Hawthorne, H.J. "Skip" Canning, Loretta Ward, Cadet Eddy DiPiano, Cadet Jimmy Greschak, Walter Conover III, Arthur Manuel, Bob Sanders, Cadet Mark Hudson, Cadet Malcolm Rogers

Middle Row: (L to R) Louise Canning, Beverly Pinelli, Jaye Clayton, Cadet Gail Zinetti, Cadet Jeff Rechtsteiner, Barbara Barry, Marilyn Sanders, Mary Brockhard and Joe Lesniewski

Bottom Row: (L to R) Priscilla Landau, Bill Reed, Hal Ward, Buck Osborn, Bud Rigg, Victor Belanger, Aneta Zinetti, Gwen Rigg, Kaye Belanger

Members not present: Virginia DeRemer, Walter Kozachek, Joe Tunning, Charles Dey, Tony Autera, Cadets Kathy Deremer, Ken DeRemer, Paula DeRemer, Derek Hargis, Pam Canning, and Jacques DuPont

First Aid Station of Princeton Jct.

Mrs. Martin Caples, long-time resident of Princeton Junction, has donated the Minutes of the First Aid Station of Princeton Junction formed in 1942 and disbanded in 1945. The following are some excerpts from the Minutes.

History of Organization of the First Aid Station of Princeton Junction.

Princeton Junction's First Aid Station was started as the result of a meeting of the First Aid Group of West Windsor Township at Dutch Neck, March 1942. At this meeting Dr. Bangs, chairman of Medical Corps and First Aid of West Windsor Township Defense Council, asked the three districts (Dutch Neck, Penns Neck and Princeton Junction) to each establish a First Aid Station.

Princeton Junction's station was placed in the cloak-room of the fire house on Alexander Road. Permission was obtained from the firemen, and a partition was erected. With aid from members of the community, the room was cleaned, painted and equipped.

The Ladies Auxiliary of the PJ Volunteer Fire Company lent the group \$10. In addition, there were individual donations of money and equipment. Also, a number of articles were loaned by members of the community. The Defense Council of West Windsor Township gave the medical supplies, splints and stretcher.

The First Aid Squad was composed of members of the community who had passed their course in Red Cross First Aid. In addition there were two trained nurses in the group. The members were: Mrs. Irvine Parrish, RN; Miss Flo Bathie, RN; Mrs. R. Bell; Mrs. Frank Cawley; Mrs. Martin Caples; Mrs. W. Duthie; Mrs. C. Hullfish; Mrs. J. Janick; Mrs. W.P. Reynolds; Mrs. H. Schafer; Miss Ida Smith.

Princeton Junction's First Aid Station was equipped and squad organized in time for the first trial

blackout in April 1942.

Since more equipment was needed, on June 27th the squad sponsored the raffling of a War Bond. This money was placed in the bank for future use. At this time the following officers were elected: Mrs. Henry Schafer, President; Mrs. Martin Caples, Secretary; Miss Ida Smith, Treasurer.

Excerpts from the Minutes

August 27, 1942 — First monthly meeting attended by all officers and 8 members. Future business meetings to be monthly on the first Monday. Practice sessions were to take place on all other Mondays.

September 19, 1942 — All officers and 3 members present (Sound familiar?) It was decided that equipment and supplies were to be used exclusively by the PJ First Aid Squad and not lent to others. Mr. Martin Caples was selected to purchase all needed medical supplies.

October 5, 1942 — Back to 8 members present. Mr. Caples reported that he had not been able to purchase the medical supplies. A check was given to Mr. Caples to purchase the supplies without waiting for the next business meeting. It was decided, "after much discussion," that scrap was to be collected by the Squad for both the Squad and the WW Ambulance Fund — to be split 50/50 on October 11th.

November 2, 1942 — Officers and 13 members. Mr. Caples reported on the supplies for the First Aid Kit he had purchased. The ambulance squad uniform was shown and orders taken for members to wear. The scrap drive raised \$116.05 so far. The ambulance squad was given \$50 of this fund.

December 10, 1942 — Joint meeting of all West Windsor First Aiders held. Dr. Banker and Dr. Bangs resigned. Martin Caples was elected as head of WW First Aid, as well as head of the PJ group, Mr. Shuls second in command.

January 4, 1943 — Officers and 6 members. Sale of scrap — \$152.55. Letter was to be written to the Fire



West Windsor Township Defense Council, General Mobilization, April 26, 1942. Volunteer Sector 1. Can anyone identify the people in this photo?

Company reimbursing them for use of heat and light in the fire house.

March 1, 1943 — Letter from the Fire Company stated that the Defense Council was paying for the heat and light used by the First Aid Squad.

May 3, 1943—Mr. Shuls presided due to illness of Mrs. Schafer, president. 4 Members present. Flowers were decided to be sent to Mrs. Schafer who was in the hospital. Mr. Shuls was asked "to get in touch with the firemen to see if they would like to join our first aid group."

June 7, 1943 — Mr. Shuls in charge. Mrs. Schafer still ill. Meetings were to be held only once a month on the first Monday.

July 5, 1943 — Mrs. Schafer presided. "Mr. Shuls talked about First Aid and Gas that was discussed at a meeting in Penns Neck." Ambulance was also discussed and obtaining plates for it.

September 13, 1943 — Mrs. Pizzuto to purchase six folding patterns for PJ surgical dressing classes. It was decided to go back to two meetings a month, on the first and third Monday. Business meeting "followed by questions on first aid and then practice on bandages, splints and transportation."

(No minutes from 1944)

January 6, 1945 — Mr. Shuls called meeting to order. All officers and 2 members were present. It was decided that the First Aid Room would continue to be located in the firehouse. Some donations received by the First Aid Squad were to be given to the Fire Company. Mrs. Pizzuto was nominated to clean the First Aid Room. Mr. Shuls suggested that the Penns Neck First Aid Group join with the Princeton Junction group.

There the minutes end. No one knew at the time that the war had only a few more months to go.

Acquisitions

- Evening gown c1950s donated by Karen B. Geiger.
- Painting in oval frame from the Coward House donated by Ruth Finkelstein.
- Pinwheel or "Yo Yo" quilt made by Hazel Breese, donated by Lorraine Kapp.
- Deeds of the Grovers Mill area from Lawrence Dey, donated by Vivian MacPherson.
- Receipts, deeds, mortgage and tax bills from the late 1880s in connection with West Windsor, donated by Mr. and Mrs. Walter F. Conover, Jr.
- Minutes of the First Air Station of Princeton Jct., 1942-45 and muslin bandages from that period, donated by Alice Caples.

Our grateful thanks to these donors whose contributions provide excellent reference and exhibit material to us.

Corrections

Charles G. Tindall of Winchester, Va. has sent us two corrections to our Fall-Winter 1987 issue:

- p. 2 - Sheldon Moore (1959-65)
- p. 5 - Hannah Tindall (1952-58)

We regret these errors and appreciate Mr. Tindall's assistance.

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