

**THE CHATHAM EMERGENCY
SQUAD**

A HISTORY AND COMMENTARY

By

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PREFACE

First, a few comments about histories. Usually by the time someone gets around to writing a history the people who knew about the old days – the history – are long gone. And there's the added problem of written records, or lack of written records. And so it is with the Squad. The Squad has served Chatham for 61 years. Your historian remembers, sometimes not too well, about 36 years worth of Squad activities, plus some stories, sworn to be true (or almost true or maybe a little true) of the early days.

Some things don't change. An alarm goes off and volunteer Squad members drive off to give first aid and carry the victim to the hospital. And in the case of Chatham they did this with skill and compassion and were from the beginning highly regarded by the town and by medical persons with whom they worked.

This history is not only filled with historical good deeds, but with tales of administrative and operating practices now considered quaint at best. Ugh, at worst. But always the sick and injured got the best care that first aid practice of the times could deliver.

There are a few Squad members' names scattered throughout this history, but omitted are scores of names of members whose contributions have been tremendous. Those named are here mostly because they marked some significant event or change in the course of activities.

WHAT IS THE SQUAD?

The Chatham Emergency Squad is a fully volunteer group of Chatham citizens. No paid members. Its purpose, as set forth in the Constitution, "shall be to render Basic Life Support to sick, injured and disabled persons in Chatham Borough and Chatham Township; to provide ambulance transportation to those persons; to promote safety; and to render Basic Life Support and ambulance transportation as may be agreed upon with neighboring communities."

Or, in brief, when a resident or visitor calls for help, the Squad responds 24 hours a day to render first-aid care and, if necessary, take the person to the hospital for advanced medical attention – all free of charge. There is no other organization available to Chatham to handle these problems. Thus the Squad's mission is not only important, but can be a matter of life and death.

Squad members are generally not medically trained people when they join. They are engineers, lawyers, postmen, homemakers, nurses, students, etc. You name the worthy background and we'll probably find there has been such a person on the Squad.

A THUMBNAIL HISTORY

In most communities prior to the 1930s first-aid and ambulance service was provided by funeral homes, fire departments, the police and hospitals. Response was ragged and first-aid care was at a minimum. Trained volunteer squads appeared to be the answer to a serious need for better care for the injured and suddenly ill. And so it turned out, as over

400 volunteer squads appeared in New Jersey and remain today the primary provider of this service in the State.

The Chatham Emergency Squad was founded in 1936, as a part of the Borough Fire Department. It remained a part of the Fire Department until 1951 when a shortage of firemen interested in first-aid activities made it necessary to form a separate corporation which could draw members from the entire Borough – male only, of course.

The Squad served the Borough and most of the Township, but could not take Township members because of limitations on the alerting system. Squad members were summoned by Borough-funded telephone bells in each member's home and by the Borough fire horn.

In 1954, because of inadequate firehouse garage space for the ambulance, the Squad moved to a newly constructed headquarters on North Passaic Avenue, where it remains today. The building was an extension of a plumber's shop.

By 1959 the increasing number of calls and a continued shortage of male members resulted in the admission of women, a traumatic decision on the part of the all-male organization. Within a few years the ladies made up half the membership, still drawn only from the Borough.

A new electronic paging system introduced in 1977 made possible the recruiting of Township members. By this time all of the Township, as well as the Borough, was served by the Squad.

The Squad maintained high training standards from its beginning, using Red Cross first-aid courses as basic training, supplemented by many specialized courses given by local hospitals, often sponsored by the New Jersey State First Aid Council. However, throughout the United States first-aid service quality was generally in a sorry state, an era of "swoop and scoop" in many parts of the country. First aiders would "swoop" into the scene, do a minimum of first aid (often because they had no training), load the victim into a vehicle and rush off to the hospital. It has been said, probably with a grain or two of truth, that a funeral home providing ambulance service more often gets paid for funerals than for ambulance transportation they provide – something to think about when you're lying seriously ill on a cot on the way to the hospital.

In 1968, the Federal Government stepped in with the Federal Highway Safety Act which made certain federal funding for highway building dependent on the state's implementing a serious training program for first aiders. New Jersey adopted its own Highway Safety Act in 1971 in compliance with the Federal law. Out of this came, with several years of growing pains, the Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) training program. This program ultimately became the basis for both volunteer and paid first-aid certification as a requirement for active (certified) Squad membership.

On August 8, 1982, a second Squad building was dedicated in the Township, with the Squad working out of both buildings. Two ambulances, replaced every few years, were in operation from the early 1950s until 1989 when a third ambulance was put into service.

Today, in 1977, 30 to 40 volunteers continue to provide the only emergency first-aid and ambulance service available to residents and visitors in Chatham.

HOW THE SQUAD WORKS

The Squad procedures for responding to calls for help and the responsibilities of Squad members have varied only slightly from those originally established when the Squad was formed. The major difference is the use of “area responders,” a practice made possible by the use of the paging system which was not available until 1977. More on that later. The Squad responds to calls 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The response is the same whether night or day.

All “certified” members are expected to undertake all Squad tasks as needed – first aid, patient handling, ambulance driving, cleanup and, of course, the many administrative and operations tasks which keep the business going. This is in contrast to some squads which utilize limited-duty members for, say, just driving, or are administered by “non-riding” retired members. A “certified” member is one who has completed all training requirements and has been approved for full duty by the appropriate Squad officers.

Members serve one 12-hour shift a week, either daytime or nighttime, and one weekend day every few weeks. In addition, all members, as “area responders,” answer many calls outside their regular duty periods, as discussed below. A member is fully responsible for seeing that his or her duty period is always filled. The member must get “cover” – someone else to take the spot in case of any absence, vacation, social and family obligations or illness. Coverage is rarely a problem, since all Squad members are happy to fill in if they have nothing else on their calendars. Covering members just have to be home and available.

When members are on call, they basically respond from their homes. They do not have to stay at Squad headquarters for any specific length of time. They do, however, have to check all three ambulances at the beginning of each shift, meaning a complete check of all first-aid supplies and equipment and the functioning of the ambulances themselves – engines, lights, radios, sirens. Thus, this checkout is done twice a day, seven days a week. In addition, all crews meet weekly at the Squad headquarters for brief ongoing training sessions. Lastly, the crews may want to socialize a while, but they can return to house and yard, babysitting, etc. when the spirit moves them, or on orders from their spouses.

When a call for help comes in on their pagers, activated by the police dispatcher, “on-call” members must respond immediately, either by private car to the scene or by ambulance, depending on how each crew has made arrangements for a particular shift. No time to arrange baby-sitting, dry off from a shower, etc. In addition – and this is an important part of the Squad’s truly quick response – any available member not on call is encouraged to go immediately to the scene as an “area responder” and render whatever

assistance is necessary until the duty crew and ambulance arrive. Sometimes no one else is available and sometimes several “extras” appear. Excess members are expected to leave the scene quickly to avoid overcrowding. Not only do the “area responders” significantly speed up the response, but they also may be desirable to help move the patient or undertake some of the many tasks that may be required in a complex situation. These “volunteers” go back home while the duty crew completes the call to the hospital.

If by chance the duty crew is already on a call when a second or third call for help goes out, the dispatcher will so advise the Squad on the pager (“duty crew out”) and any available member will respond and complete the second or third call. A “duty-crew-out” call will rouse to action many members who might otherwise have had prior obligations. Only rarely is it necessary for the dispatcher to put out a second request due to lack of response.

THE SQUAD AND ITS PUBLIC

Public perception of the Squad and its mission is an important factor in the Squad’s continued operation. The Squad must have members and it must have financial support. The morale of Squad members is also clearly influenced by the way they are perceived.

Squad members are well recognized for the work that they do by those citizens who think of the Squad at all. And here lies a problem: The Squad is, for quite explainable reasons, the least known of the organizations providing service to the towns – police, fire departments, public works, trash services, etc. Surprisingly few of users of the Squad know where help comes from or whether there are two squads (Borough and Township) or whether the members are paid or some are paid or all are volunteers.

None of us likes to think about accidents and illness. The thought of the Squad’s function is understandably unsettling to many. A limited survey of new residents in one area several years ago brought out that very few new residents remembered reading the bright-colored Welcome Wagon handout about the Squad. They all knew about the Fire Department. At open house functions during celebration days in the Borough, very few residents accept the invitation to “see their Squad,” in spite of arrows and posters pointing them to the Squad building – and the promise of cookies.

About 25% of those who call the Squad in emergencies or routine transportations write thank-you notes or make financial contributions related to that particular call. This is not lack of appreciation. It simply reflects a fact of Squad work – a family’s concern is for the patient and the family itself, in often very trying circumstances, circumstances which may continue for a long period after the initial problem that brought the Squad. Anonymity is the usual fate of the Squad person who may weekly – or more frequently – struggle out of bed to help an unknown resident, but who no doubt grumbled loudly when his or her own infants roused the family a 2 a.m.! During an active week some Squad members respond to 10 to 15 calls, involving as many or more hours.

THE SQUAD IN ACTION

The history of most organizations concentrates on the deeds they do – for the military the details of this battle and that battle, for fire departments comments on the great fires of yesteryear, and so on. But for the Squad, what is done is not a public matter. A minority of calls, such as auto accidents, are, to be sure, often newspaper stories and one sees the Squad’s contribution briefly in print. All others are confidential and those who request Squad help can be sure that whatever the problem it will not become public. Squad members are bound by the rules of the Squad not to discuss Squad calls in any manner that could result in the details of the call becoming public. Most of the Squad’s work is thus rightly unknown to the citizens of Chatham and the specific contributions of Squad members are unheralded.

In general, for the historical record, the Squad handles most of the ills and accidents that can befall us all. In a community such as Chatham, heart attacks and breathing difficulties are the most common problems. Relatively minor auto accidents result in many calls, with an occasional very serious accident resulting in severe injury or death. This is in contrast to Squads serving major high-speed highways where serious accidents are much more frequent. Broken limbs from falls, and miscellaneous medical problems from diabetic situations to strokes and seizures, represent a significant number of calls. Many are simply unknown medical problems.

The call record for a number of years is tabulated below. Note that the number of routine transportations dropped off dramatically in 1989 when it became necessary to limit transportation work in order to be sure that the Squad, with limited membership and with backup from other towns questionable due to their own membership shortages, could reliably respond to emergencies.

	1950	1960	1971	1980	1984	1989	1993	1996
Emergencies	22	181	409	558	701	716	771	780
Transportations	78	195	216	449	445	192	48	39
Totals	100	376	625	1057	1146	908	819	819

These figures omit fire and other standbys, mutual aid (48 additional calls to help out neighboring towns in 1994, for example), and lift assists.

Squad calls are not happy occasions. That’s the essential nature of the Squad’s mission. But there are lighter moments, cherished by Squad members and remembered for years after the less happy occasions are purposely forgotten. Here are a few:

Three members carefully positioned an injured lady on the backboard, upstairs in her bedroom. The stairs to the first floor were formidable, but the lady advised that her son would be around any minute and would help on the lift. So indeed he showed up and was duly enlisted for the twisting trip downstairs, which was safely accomplished. Would he accompany his mother to the hospital? “No,” said he, “I’ve never seen this lady before. I’m a salesman on this route.” History doesn’t record whether he joined the Squad.

In the middle of a mean, cold night, with virtually impenetrable snow, the crew struggled to a house wherein a lady had a problem, unspecified in her call. She had swallowed a toothbrush! The crew delved into the situation with inspection and questions. After several minutes it was decided by all, including the lady, that she had not swallowed the toothbrush after all, but had only dreamed she had swallowed it! What she had was a sore throat – and bad dreams. The crew backtracked through the snow and ice, back to warm beds, probably vowing to avoid any dinner meals that could trigger dreaming.

An accident scene in the Township. Thankfully no one was hurt, at least not physically. A jumping deer had aimed his jump so carefully that he went through the front windshield of a pickup truck, without even damaging the window frame, but landing with windshield on the laps of the driver and passenger – one of whom was still sitting stunned under the now-deceased deer. It was not recorded how long it took the crew to find “deer removal” in the first-aid book.

In the early 1980s the Squad was called for multiple stings to a young victim who blundered into a bee hive. No allergic reaction and the matter was drawing to a close. But, alas, the big family dog had gone back into the bushes and was whining miserably. He was submerged in biting bees and was in substantial difficulty. Squad member Bill Hyland threw a towel over his own head, directed another Squad member to hold a strong garden-hose spray on the bee area, and disappeared into the bushes. Moments later he came out with a limp dog in his arms and himself badly bee bitten. The dog was rushed by the owner to the vet, near death. The dog survived to come home several days later to a happy family. Bill also survived, having added another meaning to the term “Emergency Squad.” It was not noted whether his family was terribly overjoyed. This and some other incidents described here are from your historian’s first hand observations.

On a more somber note, one snowy morning the victim of an out-of-town murder was dumped in a Chatham parking lot. The Police and Squad were quickly on the scene. The Squad soon determined that the victim was beyond help, and was released. On the way out of the lot the rig came upon a van hopelessly stuck in a snow bank. Ever Chatham’s most helpful citizens, the Squad crew worked for several minutes getting the van on its way. As it left the police took a license number, and had obtained information about a van being seen earlier in the parking lot. The license plates were reported invalid – had the Squad assisted the murderers on their way? Four embarrassed Squad members waited for hours hoping the felons would be picked up. They were – and turned out to be several young men moving their properly owned van to a repair shop with borrowed license plates. They were guilty only of operating an unlicensed vehicle. But the embarrassment lingered for many weeks. No further information about the real felon.

And members’ memories are filled with many incidents which were funny to them, though perhaps not so funny to the panicked victims. Not that Squad members are in any way uncaring. It is just that some victims regard as a catastrophe what other victims might hardly note. Victims totally cared for with a small bandaid are now and then duly transported to the hospital, at their insistence. In all cases they get sympathy.

Surely an exciting and joyous Squad call involves the birth of a baby! But for Chatham's new mothers that's a rare event attesting to the care taken by Chatham citizens to anticipate delivery. To date the Squad has helped deliver four babies plus a number of near – very near – misses. The first was Frederick Chad Barth, born Sept. 17, 1970, in the rig. Four years passed with no word from Chad until one day when he and his mother appeared at the Squad door to let Chad see his birthplace. They made it by no more than two hours! The old rig, with stork painted on the fender, was in the back lot just about to be picked up by its new owner. A nostalgic time was had by all and duly recorded by the *Chatham Courier*.

Chad's birth was followed two weeks later by another newcomer to Chatham. Bill Swenson, still a working member 25 years later, was the principal helper on both births, making him a record holder. The last little person to be helped into this world by the Squad was the daughter of a former Squad member Candy Conway Snyder and the granddaughter of two long-time members Reggie and Smokey Conway. Erin Snyder was born Nov. 5, 1977. Father (and Borough Police Officer) Leroy Snyder was the principal stork helper, with the Squad arriving near the end of the delivery.

HISTORICAL SIDELIGHTS

One of the Squad's founders was Art Harvey, Superintendent of the Fairmount Cemetery. Ann Brink, widow of another founder, reports that the idea for a Chatham Squad was born while the boys were sitting one evening on the cemetery wall solving the world's problems. Oddly enough the Squad records show that the Squad's first call was for a broken leg (sledding accident) in the same cemetery. The newly trained Squad members responded in a fire engine.

Until the mid-1960s there was a section of the Township theoretically served by the Madison Squad. Officially this was west of the power lines. However, since the Township Police had no direct radio connection with the Madison Squad, they tended to call the Chatham Squad anyway. A typical Township distribution of calls in the 1960s might be 150 for the Chatham Squad to 5 for Madison. However, Madison was reluctant to give up the official service area because this represented a source of money contributions from the residents of that area. This problem represented a sore point for many years, but ultimately Madison agreed that the area was served by Chatham and the matter was laid to rest. It never created any further problems between the two squads.

Until 1959 refreshing beer was available in the refrigerator for tired Squad members. It dawned on many that beer breath does not encourage a patient's confidence, even with the soberest of first aiders. Beer was banned from the Squad building and reliable authority tells us that several members resigned from the Squad with that perceived insult. The new Bylaws of that era went on to restrict members from answering any call within two hours of consuming an alcoholic beverage.

The design and construction of lighted maps in both Squad buildings represented major volunteer contributions to the Squad. The first map was constructed by Bud Bigley in the early 1950s when the building was completed. That map, loaded with odd wiring and

connections, gave out by the late 50s. Members Jesse Benton, Roger Moll and a member's husband, Paul Schmidt, assembled a more ambitious map. It too was replaced in 1985 by Charlie Fitzpatrick and Nick Boon. About 225 lights, with switches, and 1500 feet of wire are hidden away, helping Squad members check exactly where they are going in both Borough and Township. The Township building map, just as elaborate, went up in 1983, assembled by Charlie and Bob Unger.

In the mid-1980s an old copying machine was donated to the Squad. It seemed like a useful addition so a new one was purchased in 1987 when the donated machine gave out. Handy for "an occasional copying job," the new machine in a little over six years turned out over 80,000 copies, roughly 15 miles of paper! And some of the Squad paperwork is still being either printed or done on the Public Library's copier. In mid-1994 a second copier was donated to the Squad, to be used in the Township building. How did the Squad ever function with the old electric typewriter as the only purveyor of the printed word?

Computer enthusiast Bill Cooper joined the Squad in 1986 and shortly had a computer set up in the Borough Squad building. It didn't take long before record after record was computerized. Call records, membership lists, various Squad forms have now been hidden away in the computer and miraculously appear at the push of the right keys.

From the very beginning of the Squad in 1936 there was a Squad Ladies Auxiliary, comprising the 13 wives of the founding members and adding ladies as the membership of the Squad increased. The Auxiliary ran fund-raising activities such as card parties at the local churches. Much of the ambulance equipment was funded by the ladies' work. The Auxiliary also held parties for the members. Among the activities there were theme parties at members' homes and covered-dish suppers at the Squad building. By the early 60s the main activity was the covered-dish supper. The Auxiliary membership dropped sharply when women were taken into the Squad as active members. By the mid 60s the Auxiliary was disbanded. A new Auxiliary was activated in the late 1980s for persons who wished to help the Squad with some of the routine business activities. Its small membership has substantially helped with shopping for and ordering of supplies, radio work, laundry, special Squad administrative and operating studies and, in 1996, the fund drive. With the increasing demands of record keeping to meet regulatory requirements and upgrade Squad management it appears that the auxiliary members will be playing an increasing role in Squad administration.

About 1983 Peter Zimmerman started the regular issue of a Squad newsletter, to keep members fully informed of new policies, changes in first-aid or Squad operation procedures, etc. This newsletter became an important channel of communication, especially for those who on occasion could not attend regular meetings or drills. In 1984 Carol Nauta took over this task and was still dutifully editing this valuable document 13 years later when this history went to press.

In 1986 Ginnie Philp and Dick Richards designed a 50th anniversary banner which proudly led the Squad in 4th of July parades until 1996 when it was replaced by a 60th-anniversary banner designed by Becky Sheets.

The Squad accident record has been excellent, in fact non-existent except for minor scrapes with roadside trees and curbs and damage to ambulance roofs by closing the bay doors too quickly with the remote control (a problem solved by changing procedures). All members are carefully trained in handling the ambulances, with periodic reminders to keep complacency to a minimum.

MEMBERSHIP

The single most intractable problem for the Chatham Squad – and for almost all volunteer squads – is the difficulty of recruiting new members. To those non-Squad members who read this history – and to new Squad members who aren't sure what they're getting into – be assured that work with the Squad is every bit as rewarding as Squad recruiters say. But the public impression seems to scare away the volunteers. The amount of training required and the increasing activity of women in paying jobs have been put forward as reasons for recruiting problems, but membership shortages have been with the Squad long before “training time” and “women working” were factors.

In 1949 the Squad broke away from the Fire Department, because there were not enough firemen available to be Squad members as well. The breakaway to a separate corporation opened up membership to the general public.

In 1959 there were not enough men to operate the Squad adequately. In June the now defunct *Chatham Press* had a front-page article urgently requesting men members. By the end of the year a radical solution had been proposed – take women as members. It is said on reliable authority that five members quit on the spot. Two women joined in late 1959, to be followed within a year by several more. The original women members were Charlotte Bierman, whose husband also joined, and Edna Craven, whose husband had already been a long-time member. They were, in the words of one of the two original women, given every dirty job and watched for every breach of procedure. In a few short years the ladies made up almost half the membership and gave no quarter in skill and service. In 1962 Charlotte became a 2nd Lieutenant, the Squad's first lady officer. Thirteen years later, in 1974 – it took a while – Helene Barrington became the first lady Captain. In 1986 Ronnie Read became the first lady President, with Sue Dornfeld the Captain in that same year. Ladies held both offices again in 1989, 1990, 1995 and 1996.

For almost all of New Jersey's over 400 volunteer squads membership has been a critical problem. Although we complain and pray, Chatham has had less of a membership problem than many, attesting to the spirit of Chatham residents.

The ideal membership with 4 persons on each crew would be 48 members. The 1960 Squad roster shows 32 members, including the first two ladies who had just joined. In mid-1997 the roster was 35 members. A typical duty schedule of 1962 shows 11 persons on the daytime roster, with two marked to go on vacation the next month. The daytime

schedule for November 1993 had 15 members, the April 1997 schedule 16, with some known retirements coming up. The ideal daytime total would be 20 members. These typical numbers illustrate the ever-present membership shortage.

The Squad took all emergencies and all transportations, subject to reasonable transportation requests. New York, Philadelphia, even Cape Cod and Pittsburgh trips were made, all free of charge, of course. The Pittsburgh trip brought home a boy who had dislocated his hip in a swing accident and was ready to return to Chatham after surgery. There was less of a chance of back-to-back emergencies in those days because of fewer emergencies (409 in 1970 vs. 780 in 1996, for example). Still, the Squad policy of taking all routine transportations was in force for over 50 years, with a few short periods of restriction. Backup neighboring squads, with adequate membership of their own, were more reliable than today when lack of members restricts the backup Squad's availability.

In some recent years the night membership has almost reached saturation, but not quite. Never has there been a waiting list, except in dreams! We can conclude that alarming periodic drops in membership have been with the Squad for its lifetime. By no means a good situation, but one which so far has not crippled the Squad's operation. The remaining members soldiered on and new members dropped from heaven at critical times.

All Squad members serve full duty shifts. There are no part-time Squad members. All members, as soon as their probationary period is over, are expected also to undertake all tasks – first aid, lifting, driving, and the multitude of administrative jobs. Many squads have “drivers only” and similar restricted categories, a route which Chatham has chosen not to take. Old members, if retiring after seven or more years of service, are invited back as Life Members to social occasions but cannot participate in any other Squad activity. One exception is the class of Auxiliary Membership, open to all citizens, who volunteer for some of the time-consuming administrative activities, commented on later in this history. There are a few former Squad members and other citizens who have done these very helpful jobs for the Squad, but generally the tasks fall to Squad members themselves, for lack of Auxiliary help. Retired Life Members can also march in the July 4th parade, but only a few have done so. A large majority of old members left the Squad when they moved away from Chatham.

Some membership notes:

- In 1960 Edna and Len Craven became the first husband-and-wife team. Many other couples followed.
- The first family team was made up of Reggie and Smokey Conway, with daughter Candy a later member.
- Lynn and Chris Kimler became the first mother-and-son team, in 1993.
- The two Eds Letheid were the first father-and-son team. In 1997 son Ken Swenson followed 30-year veteran Bill Swenson after Bill's retirement from the Squad

- Ellie Loock Ruffle followed her father Herbert “Hooker” Loock. Hooker was a founding and long-time member. Sixty years later Ellie was still holding up the family tradition, which also included founding member Uncle Ken Loock.
- Three members have served on the Squad’s regular schedule for over 30 years: Ken Loock, founding member, 33 years; Bill Swenson, 30 years; and Dick Richards, 36 years.
- Carol Nauta, a 13-year veteran of the Squad in 1997, has been a Certified Member, a Life Member and an Honorary Member, the only Squad person to serve in all these membership classifications. Honorary membership is a rare honor given to non-Squad persons who have rendered unusual service to the Squad. Carol was so honored before she joined the Squad.

PAID AND VOLUNTEER SERVICE

One hears the question “Are you a professional or a volunteer first aider?” The first part of the answer is that all first aiders meeting the certification requirements are “professionals.” Pay is not a factor. A definition of “professional” from the American Heritage Dictionary is “one who has an assured competence in a particular field or occupation.”

There is also an implication that paid first aiders are perhaps better trained and thus render superior service. This is not so. The volunteer first aider goes through the same training process as the paid person and is likely to be more motivated.

The level of care for Chatham is substantially higher than the level for an area that must depend on paid workers, not only for motivation reasons, but for the sheer number of first aiders that the Squad is almost always able to provide for any given first-aid situation. The usual paid service employs a crew of two persons. They must do the best they can with the four hands they have. In many cases this is simply not enough to provide the recommended first aid (special immobilization, etc.) or to provide lifting and moving capabilities for awkward transfers and heavy persons. As one paid first aider has put it, “we have to have a patient walk to the ambulance if he can possibly do so.” This is not recommended first-aid practice. There are many tasks that must be accomplished at a critical scene. Consider a typical CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) call, where ideally two persons handle the resuscitator mask, another the chest compressions, a third the automatic defibrillator. Another may assist the paramedics with the IV bags and other tasks. Yet more first aiders should be available to plan and execute the patient transfer down stairs, around corners, etc. while resuscitation efforts continue. When the crew is just two persons, critical care is bound to suffer.

YOUTH SQUADS

Many squads are served in part by members as young as 16 years old, usually organized and supervised as “youth squads.” Chatham has never adopted such a policy and consequently has not had the benefits of those extra – and sometimes sorely needed – hands and enthusiasm. The reasons have not included any question of the young people’s ability to serve well. They have often demonstrated maturity and skill in other towns, as have the particularly fine 18-year-old members who have reached the minimum age for

the Chatham Squad. Chatham's younger members have been a tremendous asset. Many have gone on to medical school.

The stumbling block to the youth squad operation for Chatham has been the Squad's interpretation of liability laws with respect to persons under 18 working with or in the vicinity of compressed gases. High-pressure oxygen is in daily use and difficult if not impossible to avoid on Squad calls. It appears that many squads have simply disregarded this aspect of youth service.

Chatham has also felt that the required close supervision and leadership required to properly serve young people is an added burden to already overworked Squad members. Lastly, the absolute necessity of keeping their squad work confidential may unduly burden young people still in high school with inquisitive and demanding school mates. Thus Chatham Squad policy requires new members to be out of high school regardless of age.

THE SQUAD AND ITS FELLOW SERVICES

The Squad could not properly do its work without the help of its fellow services – two police departments, three fire departments, and several units of hospital MICU (Mobile Intensive Care Unit) paramedics.

The police are the first to arrive at nearly all calls since they are normally on the road when the calls come in. They identify the scene for the Squad, often render immediate first aid and are invaluable as patient movers when extra hands are needed. They usually stay at the scene until the ambulance leaves. One thing that they do not do – and should not do – is to provide police escorts for the Squad. Police escorts are generally considered an unsafe practice – drivers may stop for the police car at an intersection then proceed through the intersection in front of the ambulance, not expecting two emergency vehicles in a row.

Firemen assist the Squad in many ways, but the principal expertise they offer relates to rescue skills requiring the use of specialized tools. Usually this applies to automobile accidents with trapped victims. But there may be occasions when they must rescue persons from rooftops or other normally inaccessible places. During these operations they work closely with the Squad. Until the 1980s, Squad members were trained in the use of many types of light extrication tools (jacks, etc.) and carried many of these tools on the ambulances. But the tools were removed and the task of extrication turned over almost entirely to the firemen. The Squad now carries only crowbars, small shovels, wire cutters, and other minor tools.

Squad training, however, does include brief sessions on the use of the mechanical equipment used by firemen and on the methods used for car stabilization. This brief training is solely for the purpose of giving Squad members some idea regarding how the firemen can be helpful.

In addition, the fire departments dispose of hazardous material spills, not only for the safety of the scene, but for the protection of the environment. A common spill is gasoline from wrecked automobiles.

Lastly, the fire departments are often called in whenever a very heavy patient must be moved. There have been several Chatham citizens over the years weighing in excess of 400 lbs. These require more hands than the Squad can muster and sometimes stronger lifting equipment. The fire departments are also blessed with many strong young men.

Many Squad calls involve the close cooperation of the Squad and local hospital paramedics who are trained to provide the advanced life support beyond the expertise of the Squad. The dispatcher calls for the paramedics whenever there is any possibility of a life-threatening emergency – breathing difficulty, heart problems, unconscious person, a serious accident, or simply an unspecified problem called in by a distraught person. If the paramedics' services are not in fact needed, they cheerfully leave. A Squad member may ask for the paramedics if initial checking of the patient indicates a possible problem not originally expected. The paramedics cannot be called by individual citizens.

The paramedic program has been in place since the 1970s, first manned by both paid and volunteer persons, but now only by paid personnel. The paramedics have no patient transportation vehicles of their own. If they do, in fact, take some action at the scene and travel with the Squad to the hospital, there is a substantial charge. Occasionally the patient has misunderstood that the Squad was charging for services, but this misunderstanding is fortunately rare. With all three of these services – police, fire, and paramedic – the Squad has worked closely, smoothly, and harmoniously.

NEW JERSEY STATE FIRST AID COUNCIL

The Squad joined the New Jersey State First Aid Council in 1937, soon after the Squad was formed. The NJSFAC represents the majority of first-aid squads in the state, with about 430 squads and many thousands of first aiders in 1997. Since 1929 it has represented the first-aid community with training programs, representation in the State legislature, and many other activities promoting quality of first-aid care in the State. Almost all of the member organizations are volunteer, as are the officers of the Council. There have been many stormy eras when the Council has tangled with the State Department of Health over Department proposals which have not, in the Council's opinion, been in the best interests of quality first aid.

Carl Henrich of the Chatham Squad, a Chatham Squad founder, was for 32 years a strong voice in the Council, serving as president and as the long-time delegate from Chatham. Carl continued to serve for many years after he retired as an active Squad member. Chatham currently belongs to the 8th District (of 24). Squad members are elected each year to serve as delegates and alternates to the District monthly meetings.

It can be noted here that Squad members are also appointed each year to represent the Squad at organizations associated with Overlook and Morristown Memorial Hospitals.

These organizations have been established to assure a maximum of cooperation between the hospitals and the squads that serve them.

THE ALARM SYSTEM AND SQUAD OPERATION

Of all the changes in Squad practices, none had so great an influence as the system that calls Squad members into action. In the early days of the Squad – and for over 30 years – members were alerted by a bell installed in each Squad member’s home by the telephone company. When help was needed, the police activated the bell. No address or nature of call could be broadcast. All responding Squad members went directly to the building, whether “on call” or not. The first three or four members arriving at the building took out the rig. Other members checked the address on the bulletin board and went to the scene. “On-call” members had to follow. Others could follow if they wished, the forerunner of today’s area responses.

The first bells were little, but fearsome, black boxes that guaranteed a response from everyone in the household! The bell practically plastered the member, spouse, and kids on the ceiling. In later years the mighty bells were replaced by lesser devices with gentler tones, but something was lost in the excitement of the call.

The alarm was four sets of two rings. The same signal was put on the fire horn so members working outside their homes could hear the call. Thus arose the term “four deuces,” which for over 40 years was the nickname for a Squad call and prominently used in publicity. Long after the bells were no longer in use, the fire horn continued to blast out the four deuces. Gradually that practice has faded and today is usually omitted.

The old bell-alarm system obviously created a far different call response than we have today. “On-call” members from far reaches of the Borough had to go down to the building to find out where the call was. If persons were not on call the more distant members did not often respond. Fortunately, quite a few members lived within a reasonable distance of the building.

More significantly, Township residents could not join the Squad. The agreement between the Borough and the phone company did not permit the bell system to be installed in Township homes, and it would not have been very effective anyway, lacking a verbal message. It’s a wonder that enough members could be drawn from only Borough residents. The Squad still served most of the Township as it does today. The exception has been noted elsewhere in this history.

Finally in the late 1960s the electronic Plectron pager arrived and the bells were all disconnected. The original pager was a big black box. They were portable, but just barely. In 1997 the Borough and Township dispatchers still give us our “Plectron” tests just before 7:00 p.m. (1900 in this modern day) even though the old Plectrons, made by the Plectron Corporation, have long since been discarded. With the advent of the Plectron, Township residents could join the Squad, addresses could be broadcast, and an area-response system developed. This certainly was a landmark in Squad history.

Today (1997) we have tiny alerting pagers that can play back the call in case some detail was missed by the listener. Who knows, some future pager may extend the playback to soothing music so that night responders can get back to sleep after the call? Most Squad members carry the pagers whenever they are in town.

TRAINING

The Squad's founders would hardly recognize today's training requirements. Not that they were poorly trained – far from it. There was, however, no course of training recognized as definitive and there were no national, state, or local guidelines or any required certification.

The usual procedure, one followed by Squads that wanted the best training available, was to take the Red Cross Standard and Advanced first-aid courses, a total of about 30 hours. The standard course was the longest, followed by a short course in procedures considered beyond the needs of the ordinary citizen. These courses were supplemented by a large array of special courses often conducted at local hospitals. Such subjects as childbirth, oxygen use, and light extrication were offered and earnest Squad members took them. Chatham encouraged continuing education, but many of the State's squads were weak in this regard. Some alarmingly so, with the “swoop and scoop” operation the norm.

For Chatham, a low point was reached in the early 60s. Many of the Squad members kept their first-aid training current and Chatham had an excellent reputation at the local hospitals. However, some of the senior members saw little point in refresher courses. After all, they reasoned, “we respond to enough calls to be current.” But taking the Red Cross refresher course became mandatory, over many objections and the loss of some Squad members.

Special in-house training was also in some disarray. Among the reasons was the absence of a coherent policy and assignment of clear responsibilities for training. Probationary members were sometimes left to fend for themselves or were subject to conflicting and strongly held opinions about what was correct and incorrect. This was one of the reasons the Squad Manual was born. (More on the Manual later.) Fortunately, there was a core of older experienced and well-trained members who carried the burden of good first aid. Founding member Carl Henrich was a Red Cross Instructor renowned in the area.

From the mid-60s on there were specific training requirements within the Squad and all members held valid Red Cross cards. The New Jersey State First Aid Council pushed hard for adequate training and sponsored much statewide training activity.

In the mid 1970s the Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) course evolved and was offered by the State to Squad members on a voluntary basis. It was much more rigorous and controlled than the Red Cross courses and there was considerable statewide objection among the State squads to its being made a requirement for squad membership. Three Chatham Squad members were selected to attend the first pilot course in New Jersey, funded by the Federal Government. The First Aid Council developed a parallel “5 Point” course which met similar standards and was accepted as an alternative training program.

The 5 points included the Red Cross course, emergency childbirth, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), light extrication, and other subjects not covered in basic first aid. Many Chatham Squad people certified through both the 5 Point program and the EMT program. To comply fully with the law, in the 1980s the State EMT course finally became the only path to certification. Through the efforts of the First Aid Council provisions were made for “grandfathering” the “five pointers” into the EMT program. By this time the course had grown to about 110 hours, including work in a hospital emergency room. Added to this were other courses, such as Hazmat (hazardous materials) and Incident Command Structures for disaster conditions. Recertification through a shortened EMT course was required every three years.

In 1992 new procedures permitted recertification by taking an EMT refresher course or assembling a certain number of CEUs (continuing education units) within a three-year period. The CEUs were divided between elective and core units. Courses for these CEUs are held throughout the State and can be arranged under certain circumstances to be held at a squad headquarters, with formal State approval. The Squad founders would be wide-eyed at present day requirements for serving as a volunteer squad person.

One training reduction was “light extrication,” generally the freeing and removal of persons from wrecked automobiles, but applicable to any entrapment situation. As a training subject it is still required of first aiders today, but only to provide background on what methods of extrication are available. The actual work is done by others specifically trained and drilled in the proper techniques. Rescue units, in Chatham attached to the fire departments, have this responsibility. The ambulances formerly carried as standard equipment Portapower jacks and air chisels. Only crowbars, hammer, and small tools remain. The modest degree of extrication training now required of first aiders at least allows the first aider to gauge what can be done for the entrapped victim to whom he may be giving first aid.

A new feature in training is the AED (automatic external defibrillator) course permitting the use of a heart-shocking device which has been determined to be a key factor in reversing cardiac arrests. The first AED was put into service by Chatham in 1993. Certified users are designated EMT-Ds. In addition, the existing EMT-A course, the basis of squad training for many years, was being phased out in 1997 and replaced with the EMT-B course, similar in length but with different emphasis. Many EMT-As have upgraded.

The great fear through all of these training changes was that volunteers would simply resign rather than invest so much time. It didn’t happen. Generally in the State, and certainly in the Chatham Squad, the members rose to the occasion and upgraded their credentials, not of course without some muttering. The certification procedures and the EMT courses are still evolving. And there is continuing concern that the training requirements might discourage potential members.

One unintended benefit of the extensive training requirements is the probable effect of this time and effort expenditure on the Squad person’s outlook on staying with the Squad.

With such a time and energy investment, members are less likely to leave if they become temporarily disenchanted with some aspect of the operation, a problem that afflicts all such organizations and especially volunteer activities. One of the serious problems of Squad administration is the shortage of members. Current members can be held only when they're happy. There's no other pay. Contrast this with the usual citizen's paying job, wherein subconsciously or not, he or she is less likely to act impulsively and quit. Most paid employees have to work to eat.

One light historical note is appropriate for the training section. In the 1980s when many of the "Five Point" trained Squad members were also taking their EMT basic courses, one irreverent group of five Squad members and one Township policeman shook up one large class of over 100 students at Overlook Hospital by showing how life is lived in Chatham. Came dinner time in an all-day, all-evening class, most of the budding EMTs filed out of the auditorium for bag dinners. Not Chatham. With straight faces, the 6 assembled around a table in the front of the lecture hall, laid out a linen table cloth and napkins, sterling-silver flatware and candlesticks, table flowers and wine (grape juice, to be sure), put their sandwiches on the best china, and solemnly munched away. Never a smile from the six, including your historian who was just an innocent eater, of course. Most of the returning students simply stared and stared. Who knows what they later told their families. A not insignificant, but unrelated, announcement at the end of the course: the six Chathamites were the top six students in the final written exams!

THE MANUAL

In the early 1960s after 25 years of operation, the Squad was struggling along with weak bylaws, no written operating guidelines, and some lack of interest in administrative details, from formal accounting procedures in the handling of Squad funds to adopting and following consistent administrative procedures. The rugged "old guard" was retiring and the newer members had too little direction.

A typical problem was the adoption of new rules at a business meeting. Those members attending the meeting heard the new rules, those absent didn't, and after a few months the meeting minutes were likely to have disappeared into the files. Few could remember what had been decided. Selective enforcement was a hazard.

Thus a written manual was in order, for issue to every member. This was a formidable task since there were endless differences of opinion regarding what procedures were in effect or should be in effect. Operating a squad is a relatively complicated matter, both because of its sensitive mission and because it is a fair-sized business enterprise.

How to resolve all these into a coherent document that met with majority approval? The key was to forget what the present procedure was, but figure out what it should be. Under Dick Richards' direction with the help of several thoughtful members, one item after another was attacked, in seclusion. Then the officer least likely to approve was first approached and made to think that the innocent rule writer was simply putting in writing what he understood to be that officer's excellent opinion. In most cases the officer felt flattered to be asked and agreed that yes maybe he had said that. And so the manual was

born. Six months of longhand writing typed up in about 75 single-spaced pages by Libby Richards. When presented to the membership, the proposed manual passed with hardly a dissent. Without the carefully orchestrated approach to manual writing, many of the sections would have passed only over someone's dead body. The final copy for duplication by stencil (that was BWP – before word processors) was prepared by Chatham Borough High School's typing classes.

In 1990 all the Squad's written operating documents were reviewed in detail, updated, retyped by Auxiliary member Betty Williams (this time by word processor), and a new Manual was issued. About 10,000 sheets of paper were involved.

The Manual, including Constitution and Bylaws, is not the most widely read literature around, but one knows that in case of disagreement the answer is most likely there in writing. Captains, Presidents, and other officers can refer members to the written word without taking direct responsibility for pushing a particular view. One may damn the Manual perhaps, but not the officer doing his job. A great boon to the health and happiness of leaders, as well as an asset to Squad performance.

THE GROWTH OF THE BOROUGH HEADQUARTERS BUILDING

In the late 30s and all of the 40s the single ambulance was housed in the firehouse. The Squad became a separate Corporation on July 1, 1951, and in 1954 moved to a new building of its own on North Passaic Ave. The lot had Jeff Would's plumbing shop in the rear, which became the meeting room and the storage room of today's Squad building. The rig bay was new and professionally constructed, but with the help of many hard-working Squadmen. The work was financed by a Squad fund drive. Compared with the buildings housing our neighboring squads, ours was spartan – a storage room, meeting room, rest rooms, kitchen, and rig bay – and a flat roof that leaked then and leaks now, over 40 years later. No lounge.

There were many objections to dividing off part of the rig bay to make a lounge, but it was done anyway. This controversial addition was a great success and reluctant Squad members even agreed to put some comfortable furniture in it.

In the 70s, without much Squad discussion, one of the more impetuous leaders had installed the skylights that now make both the lounge and the rig bay much brighter. They, too, have been a worthwhile addition – and added to roof leakage.

Today, as the Squad has become considerably more sophisticated in its operation, as befits a substantial business enterprise, changes like this would be under far more scrutiny. Thus the Squad spares itself from costly errors, but now and then, as evidenced by the building changes, a good idea could get lost.

Another major upgrade included a great expansion in cabinet and storage space, at a cost of about \$20,000. For 30 years the Squad got along with two 5-foot-long cabinets on the south wall, a total of 10 feet. These held first-aid supplies and spare uniforms. The rig's inadvertent backing into the uniform cabinet was probably the final straw that

precipitated a major overhaul in the mid 1980s. Today the entire south wall and most of the back wall consists of cabinet space almost to the ceiling, roughly 10 times the former space – and guess what? By 1993 there wasn't enough storage space and the coat area in the front hall was enclosed by lockable uniform cabinets.

At the same time, members complained that the available 4 feet of bulletin board was not adequate, so the contractor installed 36 feet of bulletin board covering all available rig bay wall space, plus several feet more in the lounge. And guess what again? Too little bulletin board space! In 1994 more bulletin boards were installed in the meeting room, for training notices. And notices are being tacked to doors.

In the early 1990s the back storage room was thoroughly cleaned out, including disposal of WWII disaster supplies. Shelving was doubled by member workers and there was empty space all over. By 1994 again there was hardly room to walk through the room. All long-time home owners will recognize this virus.

Other changes to the Borough building have included upgrading of the kitchen, the purchase of new, more hardy furniture, and the 1993 installation of an emergency power generator, to operate both lights and the rig bay doors in the event of a power outage. One loss was the big old stove that warmed many Squad covered-dish suppers in days long gone. The law relating to “public” kitchens decreed a hood, a fan, and a fire-suppression system that seemed to cost as much as the original building. One could not just disconnect the stove. That too was not legal. Fit it out or get rid of it. It's gone. Bless the microwave, not an item envisioned in the 1950s Squad planning.

The Borough had a fine identifying sign “Chatham Emergency Squad” proudly displayed across the front of the building. But in the early 1960s a portico was added to cover the front-door area. The portico roof was located where the word “Squad” had been. For about twenty years the building was thus identified as “Chatham Emergency” before the ever-frugal membership approved a new sign, returning the word “Squad.”

THE TOWNSHIP HEADQUARTERS

Today the Squad operates out of two buildings, the original Borough headquarters and a much more modern structure in the Township. The idea guiding construction of an ambulance station in the Township was put forward by Township residents, Township politicians, some Township Squad members, and even some members of the Long Hill Fire Department who, it was rumored, were prepared to form another squad if a Township Squad building was not provided. After all, the Borough and Township supported separate fire departments. Why not separate squads? As all Squad members are well aware, it is a major ongoing effort to keep membership in a single squad up to operating levels, drawing from all the citizens of the Borough and Township. That situation gets worse, not better, as time goes on.

The Township was willing to provide land and strong moral support for such a station, so the idea grew. The Township citizens provided generous financial support to move the project forward and the Squad ultimately found itself with a new building. The building

provides needed space for the Squad's third rig and gave residents a sense that they have added protection. Also the large size of the Squad's most recent rig (1994) is such that two rigs no longer fit well in the Borough building and the Township building now houses two of the three.

However, the operational problems envisioned in the original building study have never been solved. The two towns are served by whichever rig happens to be nearest to the crew on duty, without regard to where the call originates. The problem is not that the Township has a building, but that a two-building operation is, as a major 1994 Squad Planning Committee observed, not efficient or cost effective. The matter will no doubt be a subject for serious continued review in the future.

After his untimely death, the Township building was dedicated to and named for former Squad Captain and President Jesse Benton who, as a Township Committeeman, made a major contribution in getting the building through the approval process and later pushed contractors into providing the best materials and workmanship at the least cost to the Squad.

In the mid 1990s new State laws relative to protecting the health of all persons in the health field made it necessary for the Squad to undertake a major review of its facilities, with particular emphasis on decontamination of both equipment and personnel. Substantial modifications to the building were indicated. In 1996 and 1997 the Squad developed plans for extensive additions to the Township building and modest changes to the Borough building. Upgrading of training and storage space was included with the new showers and equipment-washdown facilities. Final designs were nearly complete at this writing.

SOCIAL LIFE

Throughout most of Squad history, new recruits have been reminded that the Squad is not a social organization. Since the early 1960s, that has generally been the case where formal social activities have been concerned. However, before that time the Squad Auxiliary sponsored many social gatherings, at the Squad building or at members' houses. A founding member remembers that "We had a party about every month – we really had fun!" With the admission of women into active Squad membership, and the demise of the Auxiliary in the early 60s, such frequent social events came to an end.

The Squad headquarters had no real room for members to socialize. There was one meeting room, equipped with folding chairs, and a big rig bay. After a call, members would sit on the hood of the rig – if the rig bay was warm enough – discuss life for a short while, and go home. Hoods in the old limousine rigs were low enough for sitting by the agile types.

In the 70s, after part of the old rig bay was converted to a lounge, members slowly started to meet for training and to socialize. Today the common practice for all crews is to spend some time in the Squad building lounges – mostly Borough, but sometimes in the Township – during their duty shifts. They presumably solve some of the problems of the

world, along with training. Another chapter has discussed the evolution of the Squad buildings.

Since the end of the monthly party era, formal social activities have consisted of one annual officer-installation party, one picnic, and an informal Christmas party following the usual December business meeting. In the 50s and early 60s, a typical annual formal party was a dinner dance held in a local restaurant. The old Blue Shutter Inn on route 124 was a typical host. A common practice was for the Squad to provide two bottles of liquor for each table. Since many members didn't drink, much of the liquor was still there at party's end, a boon to those who did. The trick was to gather up as many bottles as one could and ease them home as inconspicuously as possible. With some tenacity and quick fingers, a lucky member could tuck 4 or 5 bottles under his coat.

With the advent of women members and a resulting increase in general decorum, the old bottle system died, to be replaced by an open bar. For many years this party was the occasion for the installation of new officers and the giving of various awards.

There came a time in the mid-60s when some members rebelled at the high cost to the Squad of dinner dances, even getting the best competitive prices. As much as 10% of the Squad budget went to the dance. The argument was that the town's citizens who donated to the Squad did not intend their donations to be used to entertain members. The contrary view was that, if asked, no one would object to providing one party a year for volunteers who gave so much time and effort in behalf of the citizens. Both sides felt strongly and one or two good members in the no-dance camp resigned when the problem could not be resolved amicably.

Thus entered the era of the formal Squad brunch, much cheaper and for many years considered to be a superior annual gala. Times change and again in 1994, the Squad returned to a dance and further altered custom by having a separate, less formal and less social, occasion for installing new officers and presenting awards.

The second scheduled social event has been the annual family picnic usually in June or July. This and the Christmas party have been totally funded by the members themselves, from annual dues.

DISCIPLINE

The Squad deals in serious matters of health – sometimes involving life or death. Certain proper procedures are essential and from the beginning the Bylaws set forth means of maintaining discipline. As noted below, legal considerations have a bearing on this matter too. Nothing remains unchanged; both the written means of enforcing discipline and the actual historical handling of these matters has moved with the years. It should be noted in hindsight that discipline has not been a major Squad problem. But sometimes overly eager members in the early days ruled themselves with a harsh hand. Time has obscured the original Bylaw provisions, presumably reflecting the experience of the Fire Department, but we do have a history from the late 1950s.

In early Squad years the Bylaws were in their usual continuous transition mode, with items added somewhat haphazardly. One of the members combined his newspaper writing and legal clerk abilities to come up with a disciplinary action section – many pages worth, in great detail. It was passed into formal Bylaws. “Charges” were filed by certified mail, return receipt requested. Fairly elaborate trial provisions were made, lawyers provided for if needed. In general, disciplinary action even for modest transgressions was a major operation by today’s standards.

Were these ever used? Yes! Putting fellow members up on charges wasn’t common, but it did occur several times a year. Your historian was among those who transgressed – the charge: “removing the empty cot from the ambulance without help.” Certified mail was not involved, but a hearing was. It was decided that since this was in the middle of the night and there were no other Squad members or policeman in the area, and the cot was urgently needed, the charges would be dismissed. Note: it’s still better for one’s back to get help, if possible. For a more serious matter your historian, then 1964 President, was tracked down by U.S. Rangers in the back country of Yellowstone Park to verify certain matters pertaining to a charge. Thankfully, the nature of the charge has been lost to history, as has the outcome, probably hanging.

Certainly one of the problems had to do with unwritten “rules,” considered by some to be vital, others to be trivial, and still others had never heard of the “rule” he or she was accused of breaking. Often an innocent officer was accused of making them up to suit the occasion. Being an officer, especially the Captain, was even more of a misery than it is today.

One early 1960s major disciplinary action, which pressed on because the accused refused to mediate, resulted in the accumulation of about 50 pages of correspondence and testimony and ultimately resulted in the expulsion of the member from the Squad.

Fortunately, the end result was indeed justified and all Squad members were happy with that result. This latter case is recorded here to make a point. All organizations, volunteer or otherwise, run into personnel problems in time. The Federal and State laws are such, with regard to discrimination, that considerable trouble can result for the organization that does not have fixed and reasonable procedures for dealing with these matters.

By law, the Squad must accept for membership any applicant who meets the basic physical and mental requirements. Judgment regarding unsuitability for Squad work has little or no bearing. The applicant must be given a chance. He or she can be dismissed only after recorded actions on the member’s part have clearly demonstrated that the member does not meet certain clear standards. The Squad and its officers can face suit. There are definitely clear winners and losers – the lawyers win, everyone else loses.

Now to more recent times. For perhaps 20 years or more, disciplinary action has been rare – and rarely needed. New members and old know what is expected of them. They learn from more attention to indoctrination and from the written procedures – and mostly they conform. Sometimes a low growling is heard in the background, of course.

SQUAD RECORDS

The Squad keeps two kinds of records – the records of calls and the general files of Squad activities common to all organizations. Both kinds have undergone major historical changes.

First, consider the call records. In the first few years of Squad activity call records were kept in simple daily diaries. Many of these are still in the Squad archives. Roughly penciled in are the names of the members responding – usually only two or three – the patient's name, the time, and the destination. Occasionally one or two words described the nature of the call.

Next came the call sheets familiar to many present members. They were periodically revised but remained essentially the same for 40 or more years. They were printed forms that still contained the barest amount of information, a practice repeatedly recommended by the Squad's consulting lawyers. But other lawyers descended on the first-aid scene. In the new legal atmosphere, Squads all around went to elaborate record sheets well before the Chatham Squad was finally convinced that this was the legally best way to handle call records.

So now in 1997 the Squad has two-sided, small-print sheets that members in times of weariness feel take more time to fill out than the time taken to complete the patient care. The lawyers have had their revenge. The reasoning behind the elaborate records is that if it wasn't written down it wasn't done. In any future lawsuit such records would be vital. In over 60 years of Squad activity there has never been an occasion to wish for this detailed information. But the age of litigation is with us in every enterprise.

An historical note: The Squad has never been a party to a suit. This historian knows of three or four occasions on which an aggrieved citizen has tried to sue everyone present at a scene – police, town, Fire Department, Road Department, Squad, etc. The Squad has assembled the facts in anticipation of legal action, but the complaints, without merit, have been withdrawn.

The Squad business records, too, have a history of their own. For perhaps 25 years record keeping was hit or miss. Membership applications, minutes of meetings, etc., were either lost, taken home to the secretary's house, or scattered in many different places. After a diligent search and finally a hot tip, the Certificate of Incorporation was found hidden behind a framed picture in the office. In the early 1960s, when Squad administration was undergoing a major shuffling, a great effort was made to find records and to refile them in an orderly fashion. This job took months of Saturdays! The job was completed, files consolidated, and today, 30 years later, the Squad maintains reasonably careful records – and the Certificate of Incorporation is in the safe-deposit box where it belongs. At this writing a major file updating is underway to meet regulatory requirements and to improve access. Efforts are being made to identify all past Squad members, including dates of service, from available material. Training data for all current members is being computerized. Records of immunizations and exposures to certain diseases will be kept.

Some files are being segregated for confidentiality (Social Security numbers, for example). The computer has arrived to stay.

FINANCES

The Chatham Squad has been most fortunate in the financial support it has received from the residents of Chatham. Donations from those who use the Squad services, foundation grants, municipal allocation, and the receipts from periodic fund drives have allowed the Squad to provide the best of equipment and training throughout the life of the Squad. So many squads, particularly in rural areas, struggle to make ends meet.

Over the years, Squad fund drives have occurred every two or three years, not every year as is the case for most citizen-supported organizations. Substantial increases in the cost of equipment and training may force the Squad to go out for financial help annually, but this has not been historically so.

The Borough and Township administrations provide a small part of the annual operating budget, a total of less than \$15,000 of a budget nearly \$100,000 in 1996. The capital budget for major equipment such as the ambulances is funded entirely through Squad fund-raising activities.

In the early days of the Squad, the Treasurer kept the Squad books in what we would call today a rather loose manner. All expenses and receipts were meticulously accounted for, but accounting categories were limited and tracing the cost of operations was difficult. In the early 1960s the system of Squad books was completely reviewed by professional accountants and a new system initiated. Since that time about 35 expense categories and several income categories have been set up. Budgets are carefully drawn up, approved by the membership, and carefully followed. There are thousands of entries every year, making the job of treasurer, restricted to an active member, a major undertaking.

In 1989, member Liz Boyer, assisting the Treasurer as bookkeeper, put the Squad books into the computer and the Squad took another step into the modern age. The 1969 budget was \$9860, the 1997 budget about \$98,500, not including major capital items. Inflation helped and the need for new and more costly equipment and higher insurance rates have pushed the budget upwards. Vehicles which once cost \$10,000 now run over \$80,000. New sophisticated equipment is costly. The new defibrillators, unknown in 1992, required a \$5000 investment for each rig in 1993. Basic courses and Continuing Education Units (CEUs) must be funded. The salary scale is the only item that has not surged upwards over the years. It remains a modest zero.

PHYSICAL HEALTH AND SQUAD SERVICE

A good question in the minds of new members, as well as potential members is: how do Squad members fare in the catching of various bugs from those they serve? The answer: it is almost unheard of for a Squad member even to suspect that a cold, or worse, was caught from a patient. This is not so surprising when one considers the vast numbers of healthy doctors and nurses who are constantly exposed to ill persons. So historically this has never been a problem.

But times are changing and the interest and concern for caregivers' health has dramatically escalated in the 1990s. The trigger was AIDS. And then other problems were remembered – the potential for hepatitis B, new strains of TB, etc... The health community has reacted strongly and the effects are clearly noticeable for Squad members. Preventive inoculations, where available, are now required for every member.

In 1993 rubber gloves became a must for all Squad calls. Boxes of gloves are everywhere in the buildings and on the rigs. Up through the early 90s such gloves were rarely if ever considered. Head bonnets, eye shields, face masks, disposable gowns and booties are all available in the Squad buildings. These latter items are, to be sure, rarely used – yet. The dangers may or may not be increasing, but attitudes are changing in the health field. Have you noticed recently how your friendly dentist is fitted out? You may never know what he looks like behind the mask.

Waste trash is now segregated into common trash and medical wastes, with new red bags making their appearance in the Squad buildings in mid-1994. New disinfectants are provided for the rigs and all equipment and cleaning procedures have been upgraded.

Requirements coming into force for ambulance design might eliminate the passage between the patient compartment and the driver compartment. This pass-through has been very useful for efficient Squad operation, allowing easy communication between the driver and the care givers. It was considered the best in ambulance design not long ago. Federal and State regulations now seem to require showers and changing rooms in the Squad buildings, as well as wash-down facilities for equipment such as backboards. More on this major change under “Township Headquarters” earlier in this history.

The American Heart Association and the Red Cross in the first-aid and CPR training courses have themselves followed suit in the era of AIDS. New manikin cleaning procedures, use of gloves, and use of breathing devices for rescue breathing are emphasized in their new textbooks. Many of the Squad members who teach for these organizations are again exposed to the new health procedures. Neither organization has had any significant history of transmission of disease in their courses.

A final interesting note on health problems is this quotation from the September 1994 issue of JEMS magazine, p.62: “A recent study completed at National-Louis University in Evanston, Ill. recommends that all EMS (Emergency Medical Service) field personnel – whether rural or big-city workers – wear body armor while working.” Or, in short, bullet-proof vests under the white gowns! Some day your friendly Squad person may arrive at your home in full steel body armor (white, of course) and medium battle tanks. And be known, as of old, as white knights.

What will be the impact on both volunteer and paid ambulance services? To date the Chatham Squad members have taken the ever-increasing health requirements in stride, as they did the increased training requirements in the 1980s.

UNIFORMS

Uniforms may be an odd topic for a Squad history, but they do have an interesting continuing history of their own. A photograph of the founding fathers in the late 1930s showed very neat white uniforms and hats, a legacy from the Fire Department whose members always look well when called upon to dress up. Such well-appointed Squad members have probably not been seen since.

It has always been agreed that persons attending to the ill and injured should look professional and proper uniforms are a first step in that direction. But the nature of the service, with Squad persons quickly responding from their homes, presented problems. White coveralls became the norm, but they come in fewer sizes than there are people sizes – and some of members feel they are too transparent. Thus, some blue coveralls. Winter and summer jackets might come in long sizes for some men, but the manufacturer doesn't make women's sizes. Upgrading the uniforms has aroused more passionate discussion over the years than the major expense of buying ambulances or building a new Squad building. Wool jackets become soggy in the rain, nylon might cause sparks with spilled gasoline present (thought some) – and so on.

Barracks caps for men and overseas hats for women were proper uniforms for many years. By the 1970s they faded into history with most other hats. Baseball caps came back in the 1980s as a means of identification at call scenes. Gradually the accepted work uniform (worn only by members “on call” for a given shift) has become neater and more “uniform.” Non-call members, as rapid area responders on almost all calls for help, still respond in their street clothes – and maybe baseball caps. It has long been agreed that critically ill or injured persons shouldn't wait for the emergency caregiver's clothes changing.

Note that dress uniforms in the manner of fire departments – and some squads – have to date not been considered. The impact on the budget would be considerable and the Squad has been reluctant to put citizen's donations into making Squad members look stunning on the rare public occasions when they are not engaged in rendering first aid. Only rarely do Squad members appear in the parades which are common for firemen, who, in fact, add the most sparkle to most parades. However, for ceremonial occasions, wakes, funerals, as well as parades, Squad members wear the standard issue white shirts (with emblems) and blue slacks or skirts. No gold stripes and plumes, but they look good.

AMBULANCES

A fire engine took the Squad's first patient (broken leg) to the hospital in 1936, but soon afterwards a new 1937 LaSalle ambulance went into service. Ambulances in the 1930s and into the 1980s were limousine-like vehicles. They rode smoothly as befits a limousine. The last of that type used by Chatham were Cadillacs fitted out by the Miller Meteor Company. But then the Federal Government – yes, the Federal Government! – stepped in and decreed that such vehicles were no longer suitable as ambulances – they didn't have enough room for first aiders to work on the patient.

Van and box types came rapidly into use. Away went the smooth ride. First aiders and patients both lament that we should “get smoother riding vehicles,” but this is not possible beyond a certain point. Simply stated, the best of ambulances are still trucks and they ride like trucks. But they do have the needed space, a vital factor when both hospital paramedics and crew members are working together on a seriously ill or injured patient.

Ambulances are not shelf items. The buyer designs most of the interior to provide cabinets, drawers, oxygen outlets, etc. to suit the squad’s particular needs. The ambulance body companies, of which there are many, then assemble the ambulance to the buyer’s specifications, typically mounted on a Ford or Chevrolet truck chassis. Squad members have spent hundreds of hours designing the vehicles that serve Chatham.

The first of the box-type “rigs” used by Chatham were made by the Wheeled Coach Company. These were followed in the late 1980s by the first of three Braun vehicles, the latest of which was purchased in 1994 at a cost of about \$82,000.

A very desirable feature is to have ambulances as nearly identical as possible, not easy when the vehicles are ordered over the years on a sequential basis. A manufacturer’s hardware varies over those years. For the first time in September 1994 the three Chatham ambulances were as nearly alike as practical, allowing members to more easily memorize and have rapid access to equipment and facilities that might be urgently needed.

One historical footnote: the Squad has generally been satisfied with all its ambulances, a tribute to the Squad member committees responsible for their purchases. But in the early 1980s came a crisis. The selected ambulance was from the best regarded ambulance maker in the U.S. (no name mentioned). Alas, the vehicle was a lemon, “best” notwithstanding. Squad administrators engaged an outside automotive consultant and a lawyer to pursue the problem. Ambulance company fixes were unsatisfactory and ultimately the new vehicle was forlornly sidelined in the Chatham Squad building. This put a severe financial burden on the Squad which had to get a replacement vehicle. The sick rig remained in the Squad building for almost two years while negotiations went on to resolve the problem. Ultimately, the Squad was almost fully compensated, with interest, and the sad “best” ambulance was returned to the manufacturer for good.

The Squad now operates three Braun vehicles on Ford diesel chassis. Incidentally, the upkeep and maintenance of these costly and complex vehicles is another Squad-member chore, added to the many other non-first-aid-volunteer activities which keep the Squad in operation. For many years the Chatham Township Department of Public Works has assisted in this effort at nominal cost, repairing and maintaining items which do not require specialized ambulance knowledge available from the local dealer.

This historian has noted in traveling that the ambulances commonly used in most of the rest of the world are significantly smaller than even the too-small vehicles used long ago in the U.S. We would call most of them mini-mini vans. But these vehicles, being much smaller, are also much kinder to the environment.

AWARDS

Service awards are traditionally given by the Squad to certain of its members at the annual dinner. These have been modest. The town administrations of the Borough and the Township have not developed consistent awards for Squad members, but the Borough has recognized long service in some cases.

Five-year certificates and pins are awarded to members through the New Jersey State First Aid Council. In addition, the Squad has provided small mementos such as pewter tumblers, cups, etc. to retiring members of long service and still-active members with ten or more years' service. Retiring Presidents and Captains are similarly recognized.

For many years a small plate-silver dish was given to each member becoming a Life Member after meeting a 7-year service requirement. This practice faded away in the late 70s. The selection of awards was an uneven process in the early years of the Squad. Selections were dependent on the mood of the Squad at any given time, as is true of many organizations. One year the awards were carefully selected and appropriate for the recipient and the budget, the next year overly opulent, followed by a year of minimum recognition, and so on. In 1982 a Squad Awards Committee developed a clear written policy which has guided selection ever since. Worthy members may not get solid gold eggs, but neither are they inadvertently slighted.

It can be concluded that Squad service is a labor of love and community service which is its own reward in the doing.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

There are increasing pressures on the Squad as membership recruiting becomes more difficult, training requirements increase, and the State requires additional procedures to reduce the potential spread of infection. The Squad was functioning well, but many felt that improvements could be made. In 1994, under the leadership of President Therese Pick, the Squad embarked on major programs to search out possible means to improve Squad operations. The Board Member Institute of New Jersey was brought in to lead members in a program of self review of attitude, leadership training, volunteer development, public relations, and other features of Squad performance. Members participated in several hands-on seminars.

A Long-Range Planning Committee was also set up in 1994. Its stated mission: "To insure the best possible first-responder care to the Chathams by establishing a rolling 3- to 5-year plan for our operations. The plan should be a broad based road map for our operating committees to achieve our goals." The new building modifications being developed in 1997 are among the products of these studies.

POSTSCRIPT TO THE SQUAD HISTORY OCTOBER 1998

A year has gone by since this history was officially "finished." The Squad thrives, even though lack of members remains a serious problem. Never has a call for help come in that could not be handled with dispatch, even with multiple simultaneous calls. Dedicated Squad members leave showers, meals, and sleep to fill in when the pager goes off.

The major event of the year was the completion of the extension to the Township Squad Building, the planning of which started in 1996. In mid-November of 1998 the new facility will be opened for business. Not only will it provide personnel and equipment decontamination features to meet State requirements, but a new training room and storage facilities, woefully lacking in both the Township and the Borough buildings, will improve the Squad's capability to meet ever-increasing training requirements and the need for storage of disaster equipment. A new generator will assure that the heavy ambulance bay doors can be quickly opened in the event of an area power failure. The addition, costing several hundred thousand dollars, was financed by the contributions of Chatham residents and local foundation grants.

Local Township and Borough officials, old and new members, and many friends of the Squad have been invited to attend ceremonies opening the facility, to be dedicated to Dick Richards who was active in the planning of the original building as well as the extension and who is leaving Chatham after 49 years residence, including 37 years of active service with the Squad. Charlie Fitzpatrick, with over 22 years of service, will be the new senior active Squad member.

Dick Richards
Historian

THE FOUNDING MEMBERS

The men, all Borough firemen, were the first aiders in those days (1936), but all the wives pitched in as Auxiliary members and had a major role in getting the Squad going.

Raymond Brink and Ann (Police Chief)

Lyle Butler and Ruth

Floyd (Duff) Carley and Peg (Police Juvenile Officer)

Ceily Green and Clara (Ice Dealer)

Arthur Harvey and Emma (Cemetery Superintendent)

Everett (Butch) Hatten and Ursula

Carl Henrich and Dot (Salesman) /

Harold Henrich and Elena (Newspaper Distributor)

Robert Henrich and Fran (Carpenter)

Kenneth Loock and Helen (Postman)

P.Herbert (Hooker) Loock and Mary (High School Custodian)

PRESIDENTS AND CAPTAINS

Most of our state squads have both presidents and captains, somewhat confusing to those not accustomed to squad operation. The president is the chief administrative officer and the senior officer of the squad. The captain is the chief operating officer, responsible for day-to-day training and first-aid and ambulance activities. Both have the problems of running any business, but the captain faces most of the daily headaches. It has been said that neither job should happen to a community-minded volunteer.

Year	President	Captain
2023	Evan Skinner	Nicole DiMaggio
2022	Steve Davenport	Mike Lemons
2021	Steve Davenport	Mike Lemons
2020	Evan Skinner	Steve Davenport
2019	Evan Skinner	Steve Davenport
2018	Tim Brown	Joe Korkuch
2017	Rich Crater	Joe Korkuch
2016	Rich Crater	Connie Hartman
2015	Christine Grobert	Connie Hartman
2014	Christine Grobert	Alex Chorny
2013	Ricky D'Costa	Sam Francis
2012	Ricky D'Costa	Sam Francis
2011	Sam Francis	Marty Secheyay
2010	Sam Francis	Marty Secheyay
2009	Shlomo Halfin	Steve Davenport
2008	Richard Nelson	Steve Davenport
2007	Richard Nelson	Sam Francis
2006	Doug Purdy	Sam Francis
2005	Doug Purdy	Steve Fafoutis
2004	Tom Davine	Steve Fafoutis
2003	Tom Davine	Jerry Medina
2002	Julie Shannon	Jerry Medina
2001	Julie Shannon	Mark Spinner
2000	Peter Herslow	Mark Spinner
1999	Peter Herslow	Ron Hunter
1998	Jim Srygley	Ron Hunter
1997	Jim Srygley	Peggy Collander
1996	Carol Nauta	Peggy Collander
1995	Carol Nauta	Colette Fox
1994	Therese Pick	Peter Herslow
1993	Therese Pick	Peter Herslow
1992	Charlie Fitzpatrick	Ron Hunter
1991	Charlie Fitzpatrick	Bill Swenson
1990	Therese Pick	Carol Nauta
1989	Therese Pick	Carol Nauta
1988	Brian Foley	Ginnie Philp

Year	President	Captain
1987	Ronnie Read	Ginnie Philp
1986	Ronnie Read	Sue Dornfeld
1985	George Zimmerman	Sue Dornfeld
1984	George Zimmerman	Frank Kling / Sue Dornfeld
1983	Tom Bradley	Frank Kling
1982	Tom Bradley	Jesse Benton
1981	Mike Rawitz	Pete Zimmerman
1980	Jesse Benton	Pete Zimmerman
1979	Jesse Benton	Bill Swenson
1978	George Baird	Jesse Benton
1977	George Baird	Jesse Benton
1976	Bill Swenson	Helene Barrington
1975	Bill Swenson	Helene Barrington
1974	Jesse Benton	Roger Moll / Helene Barrington
1973	Jesse Benton	Dan Smith III
1972	Jim Leonardson	Dan Smith III
1971	Bob Reynolds / Jim Leonardson	Balcom Parcels
1970	Dan Smith III	Balcom Parcels
1969	Dan Smith III	Bill Swenson
1968	Balcom Parcels	Bill Swenson
1967	Balcom Parcels	John Cunningham
1966	Dick Richards	John Cunningham
1965	Howard Eick	Phil Bliss
1964	Len Craven	Phil Bliss
1963	Bob Conway	Harry Hartford
1962	Bob Green	Bill Nutto
1961	Phil Bliss / Bob Green	Bill Nutto
1960	John Stagg	Bob Green
1959	Stan Reese	Bob Green
1958	Stan Reese	John Stagg
1957	Bob Hall	John Stagg
1956	Howard Eick	Stan Reese
1955	Harold Bigley	Rudy Mencl / Ernie Frahm
1954	Len Craven	Harold Bigley
1953	Bill Conway	Bob Henrich
1952	Bill Tonnies	Everett Hatton
1951*	Harold Henrich	Ken Loock

* 1951 – Year of incorporation and separation from the Borough Fire Department

The names of Presidents and Captains from 1998 to the present were added to the original document.