

JUST A BIT OF AMBULANCE HISTORY

40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE GRADUATING CLASS OF THE FIRST ONTARIO COMMUNITY COLLEGE AMBULANCE / PARAMEDIC PROGRAM

MAY 2013

This May, 2013, is the 40th anniversary of the graduating class of the first Ontario community college ambulance service course.

During the late 1960's and early 1970's, the Province recognized the need to increase the level of training within the provincial ambulance system to improve patient care and reduce the costs of training staff in the expanding Ontario Ambulance system.

To meet this need, Ministry of Health official (and later Toronto Ambulance Service, Deputy Chief) Robert "Bob" Scott, initiated meetings with Humber College in the Toronto suburb of Etobicoke, to develop an ambulance training course that would fully train and prepare the graduates to be employed in the emergency patient care field.

This first college based ambulance training course was approved as part of the Humber College curriculum in the early summer of 1972, with student recruitment taking place throughout that summer and the "**Humber Course**" began in September 1972 at the North Campus of Humber College.

This one year course, initially known as the "Emergency and Casualty Attendant Program", included training in a number of delegated acts, including intubation and injection of medications.

The first students attending this course received many hours of hospital clinical time and regularly were called upon to assist performing various delegated acts during their training.

The year of training came to a conclusion with the students attending the Ministry of Health, Fundamentals of Casualty Care course at Camp Borden.



Practical training at Humber College 1972



Ravine rescue training at Camp Borden May 1973

The Humber College Course Director was Mr. Mariano Alves, and the first College graduates were:

Brian Bildfell, David Brown, Dennis Brown, Scott Curran, Drew Duncan, Don Earl, Halvor Emanuelsen, James Erwin, Rudolph Ghesquiere, Michael Kates, Paul Levay, Edward McGinn, Bruce Newton, James Orton, Michail Pakkidis, John Rosseter and Kim Thwaites.

Many of the graduates went on to hold management positions in the ambulance service throughout Ontario and were instrumental in the progressive changes throughout our industry.

This course was later introduced into to a number of Ontario Community Colleges and expanded to a two year program and is the present entry standard today to work in Ontario ambulance services.

A number of Colleges have also bridged with Universities expanding the course giving graduates a university degree in paramedic practice.

Upon completion of this course, graduates write the Emergency Medical Care Assistant (EMCA) exam for provincial certification.

Prior to the first Community College Ambulance Service training course, the Ministry of Health ambulance training consisted of a four week “Fundamentals of Casualty Care” course held at Canadian Forces Base, Borden and a similar course held in the Metropolitan Toronto Department of Emergency Services, ambulance service training centre.

The Ministry of Health had also decided to venture into “Paramedicine” by introducing and operating the “Kingston Course”. The first 33 week course started in October 1972 at Hotel Dieu Hospital in Kingston, and instruction was given in a number of advanced procedures. This was the first true “Advanced Paramedic” course in Ontario.

Unfortunately due to costs and other political factors, the Kingston course was cancelled after one year in 1973.

Bruce Newton

May 11, 2013