



# **NORTHWEST AMBULANCE DISTRICT**

**SERVING AUSTINGBURG TOWNSHIP, HARPERSFIELD TOWNSHIP,  
GENEVA CITY AND TOWNSHIP AND TRUMBULL TOWNSHIP**

**1480 SOUTH BROADWAY GENEVA, OH 44041 (440) 466-4900**

---

## *From the Desk of Vincent T. Gildone*

The history of the ambulance begins in ancient times with the use of carts to transport the incurable patients by force. Ambulances were first used by the Spanish in 1487 and civilian variants were put into service around the 1830's.

Early forced transports of psychiatric and leprosy patients are among the earliest uses of ambulance type equipment. The first record of ambulances being used for emergency purposes was the use by Spain in 1487 by the Spanish Army.

Civilian ambulances, "transport carriages" were used to transport Cholera patients in London in 1832. This means of transport made it possible for people to choose hospitals closer or farther away.

The US Civil War brought even more advances; a "pre-hospital care system" was developed for union soldiers and every regiment had an "ambulance cart". These carts had 2 wheels and could accommodate 2 or 3 patients. These carts did not work out well and were replaced by the "Rucker" ambulance that had 4-wheel design. At this same time transport by rail was also widely used.

The first "Hospital-based" ambulance service was based out of a commercial hospital; now known as Cincinnati General, around 1865.

Early ambulances carried equipment such as splints, morphine, stomach pumps, and brandy. The service was very popular and grew rapidly. Hospital services hired Doctors as fulltime ambulance surgeons at a rate of pay around \$50.00 per month. Around 1935, Ambulances were staffed by residents who could simply be assigned to do the work.

The St. John Ambulance Brigade was established to provide first aid and ambulance service at public events. 900 years ago the St. John hospitalers traveled the Crusaders to provide services.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> Century motor units were being developed. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century ambulance units were powered by gasoline, steam, and electricity.

Michael Reese Hospital in Chicago took delivery of the first automobile ambulance in 1899, New York City was next. The virtues included speed, faster stops, and a smoother ride.

## ***35 years of putting the patient first***

*Serving Geneva, Geneva Township, Harpersfield Township, Austinburg Township, and Trumbull Township*

**During World War I, the Red Cross widely used motor ambulances on the battlefield. Traction splints were also introduced around this time and were found to have a positive outcome on morbidity. Other advances included dispatch, 2 way radios, and more advanced medical equipment. Ambulances at this time were frequently “funeral cars” or hearses. Many ambulance services were run by funeral homes with hearses used as combination cars.**

**In 1952, a rail disaster near London resulted in a restructured ambulance moving from transporting, to life-saving mission, leading to the modern ambulance system. CPR, pharmaceuticals, and defibrillation all became part of this massive shift.**

**Modern ambulances are now often custom-built. Special medical equipment is now built into the units. Industry-wide improvements have made the modern ambulance more versatile and safeguard the crew and patient.**

**Ambulance design is still evolving largely due to the growing skills and role of the Paramedic. As an example, in today’s world Israeli ambulances are armored to protect them in a terrorist attack. Their paramedics and EMT’s are armed as well. Clearly a sign of the times we live in.**

***35 years of putting the patient first***

*Serving Geneva, Geneva Township, Harpersfield Township, Austinburg Township, and Trumbull Township*