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Coober Pedy, 100 Years the discovery of Opal

By Kerry Medway - Author and Former BCA Missioner

BCA's first touch with the frontier opal mining community was in 1946, when the BCA Flying Medical Service flew in for evacuations and medical clinics. In the 1960s two BCA Nurses came and a Medical Centre was established. Sisters Heather Heaver and Pat Darby were the first nurses and they had to be tactful in recording medical records with many miners living in Coober Pedy under assumed names. One BCA nursing sister won a medal for bravery; Sister Anne Dau went down a mine shaft to examine a miner who had fallen over 50 metres. She was awarded a Certificate of Merit from the Royal Humane Society for her bravery and compassion. The Medical Centre became a centre of local care and assistance with BCA Sisters Carol Allen and Michelle Blundell assisted by local community nurse Sister Vicki McCormack (a member of the Catacomb Church along with her mining husband, Albert). The Sisters were granted a special licence to take X-rays and were often called upon to act as vets and treat wounded pets (outside at the back of the hospital). The Sisters also taught Sunday School and reached hundreds of children for Christ