

CITATION

THE NORTHERN TERRITORY POLICE MUSEUM AND
HISTORICAL SOCIETY INCORPORATED



AUGUST 2025

National Police Remembrance Day

29th September



Northern Territory Police History Museum

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Contents:

- President's Message
- Editor's Message
- The Wall to Wall Ride. How it all Began
- How the Wall to Wall Baton Run Came About
- 10th Anniversary Baton Run 2019
- Ode to the Riders of Remembrance
- Northern Territory Police Legacy Update
- They Served During World War 1 – Horace Higgs
- Died Whilst Serving the Community – Charles Patrick Johnston
- Life after Service – Janell Cox
- A Rare Bit
- Committed to Service Senior Constable Ruth Whitford VM APM
- Like Brother, Like Brother. Douglas Lockwood
- On Patrol – Pine Creek
- Heroine of Borroloola
- Letter from Sgt Ambrose White Timber Creek 16 Jan 1911
- TV Murder – Doreen Carswell
- Death of an Extraordinary Bloke
- Infiltration
- THE OUTCOME OF SUPREME COURT CASES – EXCERPT
- The Showstopper!
- Veritory in Elegy

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Warning: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should exercise caution as editions of 'Citation' may contain images of, and articles about, deceased people. Language used in some articles is that of the day the article was written and may not be considered appropriate today.

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE – DR GARY MANISON APM

I often asked myself the question: why do we need to have the Northern Territory Police Museum and Historical Society? The answer is the *Northern Territory Police needs to write its history to preserve its legacy, understand its present, and inform its future. By documenting its past, the agency can share its story, build its reputation, and strengthen its relationships with stakeholders.*

Since the Society was formed in 1995 there has been various arrangements and agreements with the PFES and the NTPA to provide financial and logistical support to aid the Society in its role of preserving and recoding the history since 1869 of the Northern Territory Police. Currently, we are renegotiating agreements with both organisations, and if successful it will provide ongoing support in respect to preserving our history and controlling the historical narrative.

I mention the *narrative* because there has been and continues to be ongoing enmity and negativity about policing *per se*, and the history of the Northern Territory Police. It is critical to ensure we record our history, both good and bad, honestly and truthfully, to ensure the legacy for all that have served. For the organisation it will, *build its reputation, and strengthen its relationships with stakeholders.*

The publication of *Citation* is one means of ensuring the history of the Northern Territory Police is preserved and is told in an accurate and positive manner, and informs those serving and the community they serve, of the contribution the Northern Territory Police has made to developing and making the Northern Territory a better place.

For the reasons above, please support the Northern Territory Police Museum and Historical Society and its publication *Citation*, by joining the Society.

historia vitae magistra – history, the teacher of life

Dr Gary F Manison APM

President



National Police Remembrance Day



EDITOR'S MESSAGE – PAT KING

As we reflect on the enduring legacy of service and sacrifice, this issue of our magazine brings together stories that span generations, geographies, and the deep bond shared by those who wear—and have worn—the uniform of the Northern Territory Police.

We begin with a powerful recounting of *The Wall to Wall Ride*—how it began, the spirit that ignited it, and the community it built. From its humble origins to the emotional *10th Anniversary Baton Run in 2019*, these stories capture more than just miles ridden—they honour lives remembered. Our tribute continues with the *Ode to the Riders of Remembrance*, a heartfelt piece dedicated to those who ride not for glory, but for memory.

In these pages, you'll also meet individuals who served with quiet distinction, such as *Horace Higgs*, a soldier of the First World War, and *Douglas Lockwood*, whose story is beautifully told in *Like Brother, Like Brother*.

We are also privileged to share the lesser-known, yet profoundly moving accounts like that of the *Heroine of Borrooloola* and *Sgt Ambrose White's* letter from 1911—a firsthand echo from a time long past. In *On Patrol – Pine Creek*, we glimpse the everyday challenges faced in remote service. Equally important are the voices of today—those who continue to serve, and those navigating *Life After Service*. Their stories, like that of *Ruth Whitford*, who soon after retirement, remind us that the legacy of service is living, complex, and deeply human.

This issue is both a commemoration and a celebration. It is for those who served, those who remember, and those who carry the stories forward.

We welcome Letters to the Editor as well as your stories—whether short or long. Address these to citation.newsletter@ntpmhs.com.au

Stories that are too lengthy to be included in the printed newsletter can now be viewed online. A new link has been added to the Museum website below '**Contact Newsletters**' at the **Citation & Contact Editions | NTPMHS**.

COP HUMOUR

An officer pulls over a man and a woman for driving their late-model Mercedes coupe 20 kilometres per hour over the posted speed limit. The officer approaches the car, seeing an affluent-looking late-50s gentleman behind the wheel and a striking woman at least 20 years younger—and bearing a diamond on her left ring finger worth at least a year of the officer's salary—in the passenger seat. "I stopped you because you were going 80 in a 60 zone," the officer says. The driver replies, "No sir, I was going just a little over 60." The woman says, "Oh Stuart! You were going at least 80 and hit the brakes when you saw the cop car on the side of the road!" The man gives his wife a dirty look. The officer says, "I'm also going to give you a ticket for your broken taillight." "Broken taillight?" the man replies. "I didn't know about a broken taillight." The woman exclaims, "Stuart! You've known about that taillight for weeks!" The man gives his young wife another dirty look. The officer then says, "I'm also going to give you a citation for not wearing your seat belt." The driver replies, "Oh, I just took it off when you were walking up to the car." "Stuart," the pretty woman says, "you know you never wear your seat belt!" The husband bursts out, "Shut your mouth, woman!" The officer takes a moment, and then says, "Ma'am, does your husband always talk to you this way?" "No," she says, "Only when he's drunk."

THE WALL TO WALL RIDE. HOW THIS EVENT BEGAN.

In 2009, two mates, both police officers and both keen motorcyclists, started a conversation over a beer or two. “How about we organise some mates to ride to Canberra and meet at our National Memorial?”

Assistant Commissioner Michael Corboy from the NSW Police Force and Inspector Brian Rix of the Victorian Police had been motivated and inspired by the immense popularity of an American police motorcycle and charity event held in Austin, Texas.

Known as the “Ride for the Fallen”, the ride is a special tribute that honours the service and sacrifices of the many law enforcement officers killed in the service of Texas over its long and proud history.

Around the same time, a chance meeting with Western Australia Assistant Commissioner Steve Brown invariably turned into discussions of motorcycling and plans for Police Commissioner Karl O’Callaghan to lead a children’s charity ride across the country.

So a few phone calls later and with the much-valued support and assistance of the Police Federation of Australia, a group of likeminded police, serving and retired, were brought together to develop Australia’s own memorial ride.

With the National Police Memorial as a focal point and highlighting the positive image of police in the promotion of motorcycle safety and awareness, this has now become a much-anticipated annual charity event in commemoration of the service and sacrifice of our police and for each of the State’s to raise much needed funds in support of their police charity organisations.



Each of the Australian Police Forces has a dedicated place of remembrance and reflection, where they pay homage to and remember their police officers who have died as a result of their service to the community. From these sites a very special journey begins with the intention of arriving at the outskirts of our national capital to meet and join the other contingents of riders from across Australia.

In a final gesture of police solidarity and remembrance, the ride travels through Canberra to the National Police Memorial for a short, but poignant ceremony to commence the week in honour of our colleagues and mates; their names recorded on the touch stones of the memorial wall.

The Wall to Wall: Ride for Remembrance is promoted through a national organising committee under the auspice of the Police Federation of Australia and the National Police Memorial. Stringent operational and financial controls are maintained to ensure the charitable status of the event and that funds raised are directly used to support the identified policing legacy organisations and charities.

Fully supported by all the police jurisdictions, every State and Territory is represented. Our past rides have been led by the Police Commissioners of the Australian Federal Police, Western Australia, New South Wales, Queensland, the Northern Territory and Tasmania, all of whom share the thrills and excitement found only on a motorbike and who are integral role models in demonstrating our message of motorcycling safety and awareness

Open to serving and retired members (sworn and unsworn) and all other friends, family and proud supporters of policing, the ride is not only a wonderful commemoration of service and sacrifice, but also a fantastic social event for enthusiastic motor cyclists across Australia in celebration of the police family.

So make this the year that you get the bike out from the back of the garage and serviced, renew or obtain you riders license and join us on a special ride in support of all that is good within the motorcycling community and the policing across Australia.



BATON RUN – HOW IT ALL BEGAN

Police Association of Victoria President, Brian Rix travelled by motorcycle to every Capital city in Australia during the month of July 2011 to deliver a hand-made wooden Wall to Wall Ride Baton to each Police Commissioner.



The Batons have been engraved with each jurisdiction's Police Service Logo alongside the Wall to Wall Ride Logo and have a hollow centre allowing for the names of any fallen members to be inserted and carried by their Commissioner (or an appointed representative) on the Wall to Wall Ride to Canberra. These Batons will form an important part of the Wall to Wall Ride Ceremony in future.

Two decades ago at Lightning Ridge NSW Supt Stanley Single began fashioning wooden batons as a gift for departing officers. As an extra special touch each hand-made baton featured small opal doublets – one gem for each year served at the command. Supt Single, originally a fitter and turner by trade, served at Lightning Ridge from 1990 until he transferred to Walgett as commander in 1996.

He said that, by then, word had spread about his novel departing gifts. "It just took off from there and it became a monster," he said. "Everywhere I went everyone wanted one for their send-offs." Then he got the call from Assistant Commissioner Mick Corboy about making his handiwork hobby a part of policing history – and future.

The perpetual batons created for the ride are a hand-crafted wooden style classical baton, slightly embellished with the Wall to Wall logo and a laser engraving of the NSW Police Force badge, along with the wording: 'We remember them.'

Supt Single said a unique feature of the batons will be their hollow centre. "When I started making batons back in Lightning Ridge I found it to be therapeutic – but it was a bit more work this time around because of the hollow centre, which required a bit more engineering," he said.

"There have been a few malfunctioning problems and it has been quite time consuming, however the hollow tube can contain a scroll sealed within with the names of any deceased police officers for that particular calendar year, bearing in mind the best result would be that each baton arrives at the Wall of Remembrance empty."

Each Australian Hardwood baton took around three hours to make, and each one was individually turned freehand – meaning that although they are similar in shape, size and style, no two are identical. A ceremonial ritual will mark the presentation of the batons at the Wall to Wall Ride's arrival point in Canberra.

In addition to the nine batons created for each commissioner of the nation's policing jurisdictions, Supt Single has also produced a tenth baton to be auctioned off for charity on the day of the ride.

The auction baton features engravings of each of the nine Australian police badges and will contain a scroll bearing the signatures of all the current commissioners. The vision is that from this year onwards, each police commissioner from each Australian jurisdiction will keep their perpetual baton safe, to be carried by them each year in the Wall to Wall Ride, and containing within its hollow centre a list of that year's deceased officers.

And in years to come each commissioner will also hope, as they reach for the scroll inside, to discover an empty page.

2019 WALL TO WALL RIDE - 10th ANNIVERSARY BATON RUN

Nine years ago, Georg Berk and myself headed off on an odyssey that was very special. We rode our motorcycles to Canberra in the rain to the Police Memorial in Canberra. There we met with now retired New South Wales Superintendent Stan Single – a master craftsman who had fashioned commemorative batons made out of Australian hardwoods and a special Huon pine baton for Tasmania.

Each baton was hollowed out and contained a parchment with the names of every police officer killed on duty in the respective jurisdiction.

Georg and I carried the batons on our motorcycles and delivered a baton to each Commissioner in every State and Territory. It was a momentous ride around our country in 18 days. Every kilometre, we thought of the men and women who sacrificed their lives for our community and our hardships paled by comparison to them, and the loved ones left to mourn.

I made a commitment to again conduct a baton run on the 10th anniversary of the Wall2Wall ride. Now retired and having since travelled the world on my trusty BMW1200GSA. I thought it appropriate to see if this old man, and the well-used BMW with will over 270,000 hard kilometres travelled over every continent (except Antarctica) could do it again.

This time, other intrepid riders who have put a great deal into the Wall2Wall event have decided to join us. From Victoria, Detective Senior Sergeant John Laird, current President of the Police Association Victoria, Treasurer of the Police Federation of Australia and chair of the National Wall2Wall committee is joining us on his 650 V Strom. Leading Senior Constable Mark Vipond, who is one the Victorian Wall2Wall committee is corralling us on his BMW K1600 monster and two New South Wales Ex members Detective Superintendent Luke Moore and Senior Sergeant Stephen Hudson, both recently retired will join us in Canberra and Sydney.

[2019 - Wall to Wall Ride](#)





Wall to Wall riders crossing King's Avenue bridge. Wall to Wall is held to remember those police officers who have died in service across Australia AFPM11834

[The beginnings of the AFP | Australian Federal Police](#)



THE NATIONAL POLICE MEMORIAL CANBERA ACT



*Credits for
photos and
articles goes to
[Wall to Wall](#)
[Ride For](#)
[Remembrance -](#)
[Remembering](#)
[Mates](#), Northern
Territory Police
Museum, AFP
Museum*

ODE TO THE RIDERS OF REMEMBRANCE

From coasts and deserts, hills and plains,
Through sun and storm, through joy and pain,
You ride with honour, proud and true,
In leather, chrome, and skies of blue.

From every state, each far-flung land,
You gather here, a noble band—
Canberra calls, and engines cry
A tribute strong that does not die.

You ride for those who gave their all,
Who answered duty's final call—
From New Zealand's shores to Fiji's sun,
To Samoa, PNG—every one.

For officers in navy hue,
Whose courage held when fear was due,
Whose silence now we mark with pride—
You ride for them, their memory guide.

A rolling thunder speaks their name,
Through winding roads and burning flame,
Your journey long, your purpose clear:
To hold their spirit ever near.

O riders bold, in black and chrome,
You make the fallen's story known.
Through helmet's visor, hearts still weep—
But through your ride, their watch you keep. —Lest we forget.





NORTHERN TERRITORY
Police Legacy
We Remember Them

NATIONAL POLICE LEGACY DAY: HONOURING SERVICE, SUPPORTING FAMILIES.

On 17 June 2025, police officers and their families across Australia marked a proud new milestone — the inaugural National Police Legacy Day. It's a day not of mourning, but of celebration — a time to reflect on the powerful, often unseen support Police Legacy organisations provide to those left behind when a police officer dies.

For many in the policing community, the term “Police Legacy” means more than just a charity — it's a lifeline. It's a promise that no police family will face their loss alone.

In the Northern Territory, this promise has never rung more true than in the story of the Cubillo family. When Aboriginal Community Police Officer Alberto Cubillo passed away in 2008 following a brave battle with cancer, NT Police Legacy stepped in. Alberto had only recently landed his dream role with NT Police when he was diagnosed with bowel cancer. He was just 46 when he died, leaving behind his wife Teri and three young daughters — Demi, Abby, and Tyla — then aged 13, 8, and 4.

Despite his diagnosis, Alberto kept working for as long as possible, scheduling chemotherapy around his shifts. “He absolutely loved his job,” said Teri. “It's what kept him going.”

Within days of his passing, NT Police Legacy was at the Cubillo family's side. “Tony Fuller from NT Police Legacy was at my house helping with funeral arrangements,” Teri recalls. “It was amazing — you just felt like you were, as they say, part of the Police family.”

But the support didn't end there.

NT Police Legacy continued to walk beside the Cubillo family for years — quietly, consistently, and with care. “The kids got their schooling paid for, and two of them have completed university,” said Teri. “Demi's done a teaching degree, and Abby completed a degree in sports business management — and neither has a HECS debt. That's absolutely incredible.” Karen Cheal – our Secretary – has been maintaining that contact for years now.

Demi, now 27 and a teacher at Wulagi Primary School, credits NT Police Legacy with giving her a strong start in life. “They paid for my entire degree. I finished without a HECS debt, and I could never be more thankful,” she said. That head start has helped Demi begin saving for a home of her own — a powerful legacy of her father's service and her family's connection to the policing community.

This year's National Police Legacy Day drew attention to these very stories — the ones that don't always make the headlines but make all the difference to those who live them.

NT Police Legacy, established in 1990, continues to provide long-term care and financial, educational, and emotional support to families like the Cubillos. It's one of eight Police Legacy organisations across the country united by a shared mission: to honour the memory of those who served and ensure their families are supported not just in the moment, but in the years that follow.

Provisional Vice Chair of NT Police Legacy Marcus Tilbrook summed it up: “The mission of Police Legacy is not only to honour the memory of those who served, but to ensure that the lives of those they leave behind are not defined by tragedy, but shaped by hope, resilience, and possibility.”

Assistant Minister for Charities Dr Andrew Leigh MP, who launched the day officially at Parliament House, said Police Legacy organisations embody “dedication, discretion, and deep humanity”. He added, “They check in, stay close, and remind families that they remain part of something larger.”

The National Police Legacy Day logo, inspired by the Michaelmas daisy — flower of St Michael, patron saint of police — reflects this spirit of protection and remembrance.

Teri Cubillo recently spoke about her experience on ABC Darwin Breakfast with Adam Steer, sharing how much that support has meant. “Police Legacy has been part of our lives ever since Alberto passed. They never forgot us.”

Chief Minister, and Minister for Police, Lia Finocchiaro and NT Police Legacy Board member, Marcus Tilbrook with the Police Legacy Daisy pins.



NT POLICE WHO SERVED IN WW1 – HORACE HIGGS

Introduction

Long before the bombs fell on Darwin in 1942, before the horrors of World War Two seared themselves into the collective memory of the Northern Territory, a quieter but equally courageous chapter of service unfolded. It is a chapter often overlooked—overshadowed by more recent conflicts and louder acts of wartime heroism. This is the story of those Northern Territory Police officers who, years earlier, traded their uniforms for khaki and enlisted to serve in the trenches of the First World War. We continue our series honouring these officers.

James Harcourt Kelly, Richard Hansen, Horace Higgs, Frederick Taylor, Richard Hansen, James Kelly, William Gordon.

HORACE HIGGS | Source:

<https://vwma.org.au/explore/people/367156HIGGS, Horace>

Appreciation is expressed to Graeme Fry who wrote a paper about Horace Higgs which is located at the Northern Territory Police Museum. The article is based on that paper.



Horace Higgs, also known as “Jerry,” was born on March 8, 1884, in Birmingham, England. He migrated to Australia with his family when he was about seven years old, and his life in Australia would later be marked by service in both the military and law enforcement. Horace joined the South Australian Police Force on March 1, 1907, after serving in the South African Boer War. He had enlisted as an 18-year-old with the First Commonwealth Horse on June 6, 1902. Prior to Federation, Australians served in the Boer War under the military forces of the Australian states in which they enlisted. Later in his life, Horace stated on his enlistment forms that he had also served with the South African Constabulary.

Standing at five feet eight inches tall, Horace’s career in law enforcement began when he was transferred from the South Australian Police to the Northern Territory Police on July 1, 1908, at a time when the Northern Territory was still part of South Australia. He arrived in Darwin on July 14, 1908, and shortly thereafter began his duties at Borrooloola, a remote police station. He remained there until August 30, 1910. From December 8, 1911, to September 9, 1912, Horace was stationed in Katherine. Following this, he returned to Darwin, where he worked until December 21, 1913. During his time in Darwin, he was also appointed acting Officer of Customs.

Horace’s experience in the Northern Territory left a lasting impression, as he chose to return to the Northern Territory Police Force on August 20, 1914, after serving out a five-year secondment. By this time, the administration of the Northern Territory had been transferred to the Commonwealth in 1911, which meant that Horace likely had to resign from the South Australian Police Force before joining the newly established Northern Territory Police Force. He began his new duties in Pine Creek on October 5, 1914. The exact date of his departure from Pine Creek is unknown, but he is recorded as being on duty at the Pine Creek Police Station on April 16, 1915. He also signed a prisoner record book in Katherine on March 15, 1915, possibly after transferring a prisoner from Pine Creek for court proceedings.

In June 1915, the Northern Territory Times and Gazette reported that Constable Horace Higgs had broken his leg on June 11, 1915, while riding into Darwin. His horse had tripped and fallen, injuring him badly. Despite this injury, he continued his duties, though he would later transfer to Leichhardt’s



Bar, as recounted by Trooper John “Jack” Johns, who met Horace in Darwin before his departure. In his memoir *Patrolling the Big Up*, Johns mentions Horace’s accident and subsequent transfer, noting that he had been a trumpeter before his injury.

[*Fickle Hand of Fate :: Tragedy in the 5th Australian Pioneer Battalion | Traces Magazine*](#)

At some point after his time in the Northern Territory, Horace moved to Mount Gambier, South Australia, where on April 6, 1916, he enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) as Private No. 3707 with the 9th Reinforcements of the 5th Pioneer Battalion. On his attestation papers, he listed his occupation as "Mounted Constable" and noted his wife, Mary, and their child as his dependents. Horace’s decision to enlist was influenced not only by his sense of duty but also by his experience in the Boer War. As a veteran of that conflict, he understood the risks of military service, and his father, Private John Higgs, had already paid the ultimate price. John Higgs, a former constable in Adelaide, had been killed in action at Gallipoli on April 26, 1915, just one day after landing on the peninsula.



Between August 30 and October 24, 1916, Horace attended a School of Instruction for Candidates for Commissions in the AIF. However, there is no official record of him being commissioned as a Lieutenant, despite reports in the Northern Territory Department of Planning and Infrastructure indicating otherwise. His personal records held by the Australian Archives confirm that he was still a private when he died in 1917.

Horace embarked for active service on February 10, 1917, when he boarded HMAT *Sesang Bee*, A48. He disembarked in Devonport, England, on May 2, 1917. He was appointed acting Sergeant in the 10th Battalion of the AIF in France on July 26, 1917, but reverted to the rank of Private on August 11, 1917, after completing his temporary higher duties.

On October 7, 1917, Horace was initially reported as missing in action during the Third Battle of Ypres, also known as Passchendaele. Later that day, it was confirmed that he had died of wounds sustained during the battle. He was buried in Polygon Woods, Belgium, and his sacrifice is commemorated at the 112 Hooge Crater Cemetery and on Panel 59 at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra.

Horace’s official death notice was sent to his wife, Mary, in a letter dated September 23, 1918. The letter explained that he had been severely wounded by a high-explosive shell burst on October 7, 1917. After being dug out by comrades, he was carried to a medical aid post but died on the way. His body was buried near the Battalion Headquarters, close to Polygon Wood, where fierce fighting had taken place.

The circumstances of Horace’s death are deeply tied to the brutal conditions of the Third Battle of Ypres, a major conflict in which Australian forces faced horrendous challenges. The battle was characterized by significant advances but also immense suffering, with heavy rains turning the battlefield into a quagmire of mud. Some of the wounded soldiers were even drowned in the muck. The battle’s most infamous phases, including those at Menin Road, Polygon Wood, and Broodseinde, were marked by horrendous casualties. Horace’s death occurred during one of these critical moments, reflecting the perilous nature of his service.

In honour of his sacrifice, Higgs Street in Darwin’s Moil suburb was named after Horace on September 25, 1968. The street serves as a lasting tribute to his courage and commitment to his country, ensuring that his memory would endure. Horace Higgs was one of many Australians who gave their lives in the

brutal and muddy battles of the First World War, and his story is a testament to the sacrifices made by those who served. He is remembered not only for his military service but also for his years of dedicated work in the Northern Territory Police Force, where he served his community with honour.

Horace's life and death are a reflection of the turbulent times he lived through—an era marked by personal sacrifice, the horrors of war, and the resilience of those who served. His journey from the streets of Birmingham to the trenches of France is a poignant reminder of the global scale of the First World War and the personal stories that make up its history.



[9th reinforcements of the 5th pioneer battalion - Search Images](#)

Australian artillery in action near Zonnebeke, October 1917. AWM E01209

[Third Battle of Ypres 31 July to 10 November 1917 - Anzac Portal](#)



Exhausted Australian stretcher-bearers near Zonnebeke, 10 October 1917. AWM E00941

[AWM E00941 - Anzac Portal](#)



DIED WHILST SERVING THE COMMUNITY -

Charles Patrick Johnston



Mounted Constable Second Class
Date of Birth – 12th November 1871 in England
Date of Death – 4th December 1907 - aged 36 years

Mounted Constable Second Class Charles Patrick Johnston joined the South Australian Police on the 1st August 1897. He transferred to the Northern Territory on the 22nd January 1898.

Mounted Constable Second Class Johnston served in Alice Springs, Arltunga, Pine Creek, Borroloola, Anthony's Lagoon, Powell Creek, Palmers ton and Katherine.

Whilst stationed at Katherine Mounted Constable Second Class Johnston suffered sunstroke and died of apoplexy (stroke).

Johnston Place in Rapid Creek, Darwin is named in his honour.

LIFE AFTER SERVICE – JANELL ANN COX REG. NO. 996

Born in Katherine (second generation Territorian) and living in the Territory all of my life gave me a keen interest in helping those within our community. My older brother, Cyril, had joined the NT Police in 1976 and was stationed in Alice Springs. I applied, not realising that if the application was accepted, that we would be the first brother and sister, both born in the NT, to be members of the Northern Territory Police Force – an honour that we managed to see through.

I commenced training in Darwin on 2nd October 1978 with 56 other newbies and graduated on 19th January 1979. Squad 29 of 1978 was only the second to start with policewomen in uniform. The beige shift dress, hostess shoes & cap, pantyhose (unless you had a certificate from a doctor for an exemption), handbag in which you carried your handcuffs, notebook and baton. Not a very ‘user-friendly’ uniform I must say.

I was partnered with Phil Campbell in Darwin General Duties for my first posting. I had a varied career working in several postings, all in Darwin. These included Communications, the Public Relations Unit, the Watchhouse, the Training Centre with the female cadets, as Commissioner’s Liaison Officer, Research and Development Unit, Secretariat and then into the Information Services Unit.

Whilst attached to the Public Relations Unit I was involved in speaking to children at schools about the NT Police as well as travelling to the regional shows in a purpose built caravan that had numerous displays of policing information in it.

During my 18 years of service I was involved in numerous events and conferences for the NT Police. Whilst attached to the Training Centre, and along with a number of Task Force members and four cadets, we hosted the Governor General and his entourage at Smith Point. Conferences included the International Association of Chiefs of Police Seminar held in Darwin in 1989, the Australian Police Ministers’ Conferences held in Darwin and Alice Springs in 1990.

I also researched and produced a report on “Homicide in the Northern Territory 1988”, assisted with the production of the Northern Territory Police, Fire and Emergency Services “Correspondence Manual” Second Edition in July 1991, researched and produced several computer training manuals and delivered computer training to all members of the combined service.

After leaving the service in July 1996, I then returned as a Public Servant for a short time working in the Media Liaison Unit. In early 1998, Peter Hamon, as the President of the newly formed Retired Police Association of the Northern Territory, contacted me to see if I was interested in taking on the role of Secretary. At that stage there were only around 30 members and part of my role was to make contact with former members seeking their interest in membership.



Upon taking up this role, I then also took on the position of Secretary of the Northern Territory Police Museum and Historical Society. This role was far more varied than I had expected. The Society had numerous artefacts, documents and photographs – all of which were uncatalogued, mostly unidentified and some in very poor condition. There were a number of people who were interested in becoming actively involved in the task of sorting the items – two of the most active at that time were Val Watters OAM, and Rosemary Rowe. The ladies contributed many hours of their time to undertake the preservation of the photographs initially and then the artefacts that had been donated.



Figure 1 Constables Cyril & Janell Cox

Figure 2 Travelling Public Relations display set up in a caravan

I undertook several courses to understand the nature of the preservation and restoration of the items and attended a number of Museums Australia conferences interstate. During this period I was trained to undertake “oral history interviews” with former members – this was a very rewarding experience – getting the opportunity to sit down and let them talk of their life and times in the NT Police. I also researched and produced a “Sponsorship Marketing Plan” for the Museum in December 2002.

Whilst Secretary of both organisations, I produced and edited the “RPANT Quarterly Newsletter” and the “Citation” for the Museum. I also created displays that were travelled around the NT relating to the history of the NT Police Force. These displays were taken to Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, Katherine and Darwin.

At the completion of this role I was awarded a Life Membership to both the Retired Police Association of the Northern Territory and the Northern Territory Police Museum and Historical Society for my contributions to each of them. An honour that I treasure.



Figure 3 First time in trousers for NT Policewomen

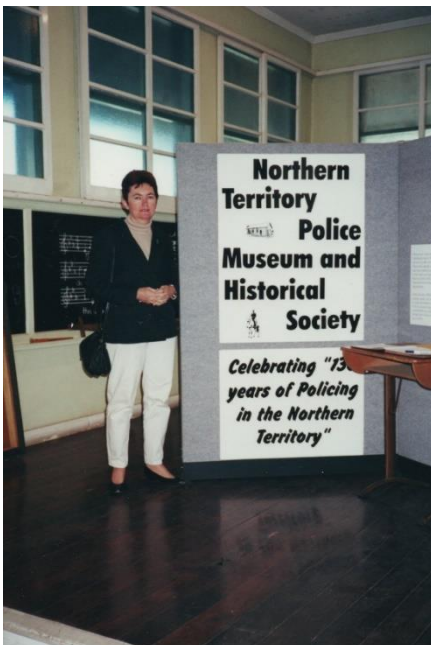


Figure 4 Travelling Museum Display – in Alice Springs

In early 2004 my partner, Paul and our son James, made the decision to leave the Territory – destination “unknown”. We sold our house, packed up our belongings into a 40-foot shipping container and left with what we could fit into our Land Rover Discovery. After around 4 weeks we purchased a 14 acre property at Amamoor, just south of Gympie in Queensland. James started school immediately, Paul managed to get some work in a short time and I settled into the Queensland lifestyle for a while.

In 2005, I started work with a local Gympie solicitor – he was a former Qld Police Officer as it happened. I became a Legal Secretary and a Commissioner for Declarations in Queensland. I worked there for over 5 years. I then took up the position of Senior Executive Support to the Executive Team (CEO, Client Services Manager & Corporate Services Manager) of Skillcentred Qld – a Not-for-Profit organisation working in Training and Work Experience for those struggling to find work.

I was then offered a position as Electorate Officer for the Member for Gympie, David Gibson MP. This was a baptism of fire as he was appointed as the Minister for Police in

Queensland but in only a matter of a couple of days, he had the position removed from him as he was caught driving without a valid licence – the shortest serving Minister for Police in Queensland history! Whilst working in this position, I was appointed as a Justice of the Peace (Qualified) for Queensland. I remained working with David until the following election where he decided not to contest the seat again which meant that effectively, I was out of a job.

I was approached about joining the Gympie Music Muster team which is run by the Gympie Apex Club – a music festival held in the Amamoor State Forest each August. The event is usually held over a period of 8-10 days, with numerous stages operating at the same time. I took on the role of Corporate and Financial Services looking after the books and sponsorship for the event.

In April 2017, I was invited to become the General Manager for the Sunshine Coast Agricultural Show Society based in Nambour. This position involved all facets associated with the management of an Agricultural Show including finance control, bookkeeping, negotiation and liaison with sponsors, suppliers, entertainers, community groups and trade sites, preparation of Risk Management Plan, Event Management Plan, Biosecurity Plan, Liquor License and other manuals, preparation and acquittal of

Grant applications with local and state government – it certainly was a full time role based on a part time wage. After my second Show, I decided that it was time for a bit of a break and a re-charge.

In April 2019, I trained to become a qualified barista and opened my first business – Click Clack Café – based at the Amamoor Train Station. This station is the turn-around point for the famous Mary Valley Rattler steam train. At the time of opening the café, the train would visit twice a day on Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday with other trains arriving on Thursday and Friday. The steam train could carry around 180 people and be at our Station for just 1 hour. This meant that it was all hands-on deck for a frantic service period. After the train had left, it was time to re-charge and get ready for another 180 people on the afternoon train. It certainly kept us on our toes. I employed 4 people on a part time basis as the fluctuations in passengers meant that some days we needed everyone and on other days just 2 of us could handle the customers.



Figure 5As Show Manager for the Sunshine Coast Agricultural Show Society

As we all know, Covid arrived on our doorstep in March 2020 and basically, that was the end of my business. We closed the doors – never to trade again. I was fortunate enough to sell the business onto another local who then recommenced the café when he was able to. The café continues to trade today as “The Village Green Café”.

At this time, my husband had also given up his position with a local Home Construction Company and began making sculptures from used car parts. I assisted with the administration side of the business over the following months.

In April 2021 I was approached by a former work colleague to see if I was interested in working with the Gympie Chamber of Commerce as their Secretary. This was a part time role where I could predominantly work from home. This suited me and I continued in this role until September 2022 when I resigned because we had once again sold our home – destination unknown.

We had often spoken about the possibility of living in Western Australia – Paul’s dad lives in Perth and he has no other relations in Australia so it was an obvious choice. We once again packed our belongings into a 40-foot shipping container – packed up the car and headed off.

Upon arriving in Perth we looked at just 2 homes – one in Toodyay (north east of Perth) and the other just outside of Bridgetown (3 hours south of Perth). We purchased the Bridgetown property and moved in a couple of weeks later – just 1 week out from Christmas 2022.

Since living in Bridgetown I have now taken on the position of Secretary to the RPANT – WA Branch and am actively involved there. Otherwise, life is good - retired and regularly head out on the back of Paul’s BMW 1200gs motorbike for a ride. Loving the change in weather even though locals call the place “Fridgetown” as it is the coldest town in WA.

A RARE BIT

Experienced Policeman often wonder at the unreality of having to recite the formal caution required by the Judges’ Rules to vicious case-hardened criminals who would as soon cut your throat as tell you anything they didn’t want to tell you. Perhaps if the caution could be delivered in good guttural Welsh, it would meet the strict requirements of the rules yet inspire, rather than retard, a confession, even from the most phlegmatic lag.

Try this out for size and sound effect – it’s what a Welsh suspect has to put up with:-

“Nid yw’n rhaid i chwi ddweud dim ond ddymunwch wneud hynny ond pa beth hynnag a ddywedwch gellir e i ysgrifonnu a’i roi yn dystiolaeth.”

In English this is: “You are not obliged to say anything unless you wish to do so, but what you say may be put into writing and given in evidence.”

RUTH WHITFORD VM APM



Honouring Courage: Senior Constable Ruth Whitford VM and the NT Police Valour Medal

Senior Constable Ruth Whitford VM, a distinguished member of the Northern Territory Police Force, is remembered for her exceptional bravery and dedication to public service. On 25 May 2014, she passed away, leaving behind a legacy of courage and commitment that continues to inspire.

Ruth Whitford joined the NT Police Force on 11 July 1988 and served with honour until her retirement on 12 July 2012. Her service was marked by dedication, professionalism, and a steadfast commitment to protecting the community.

In June 1996, Ruth was involved in one of the most perilous incidents in NT policing history. During a confrontation outside the Palmerston Police Station, a gunman, Dion Yost, opened fire on officers. Four officers were shot and wounded — one in the buttock, one in the shoulder, and Ruth herself, who was shot in the chest. Despite the chaos and danger, she displayed extraordinary bravery in the line of duty.

For her actions during this life-threatening

event, Ruth was awarded the Northern Territory Police Valour Medal, one of the highest honours that can be bestowed by the Commissioner of Police. The Valour Medal recognises members who display exceptional bravery in extremely perilous circumstances or who act courageously and responsibly in the face of potential or actual danger to their life. The award consists of a framed certificate and an ornamental medal and bar, worn as an unofficial honour.

Beyond her heroism in the field, Ruth was a respected and active member of the police community. On 28 September 2007, she served as a member of the colour party at the Police Remembrance Day service held at St. Mary's Catholic Cathedral in Darwin — a role of ceremonial significance and respect.

Ruth was also a proud member of the Stone family in Australia and a first cousin to Shane Stone, further connecting her story to a wider legacy of public service.

Senior Constable Ruth Whitford VM is remembered not only for her courageous actions during the Palmerston shooting but also for a career of service and dedication to the people of the Northern Territory. Her name stands as a symbol of valor, sacrifice, and unwavering duty.



LIKE BROTHER, LIKE BROTHER – BY DOUGLAS LOCKWOOD

When my own son first breathed the heresy that he wished to be a journalist and a writer, I said directly, “Over my dead body”. After all, human flesh and blood can stand just so much.

I, therefore, admit to being a little taken aback when he replied, “That suits me”.

Well, he now is a practising journalist with The West Australian, Perth. And my body, though gout-anguished, is not yet dead.

I have been wondering lately about the influence of other Fathers on the careers of their sons.

My father was a journalist, a humble country newspaper proprietor in the Victorian Wimmera. No less than four of his sons followed him into journalism, so I suppose it is unreasonable for me to gripe about my own son’s decision.

I know of one family – Heaven help them – with seven sons and daughters scribbling for a living.

Dad’s Footsteps is almost a tradition in The Law. One had only to think of the Starkes and the Galballys and the Menzies to understand what Family means at the Bar.

It is equally traditional in the Northern Territory. Miss Janice Newell, daughter of the late Mr A Brough Newell, graduated some years ago. James and Timothy Lyons, sons of Mr John Lyons, M.L.C., are both studying law in Sydney. Barry Leader, Son of Mr Leader, S.M., has graduated and works with the Attorney-General’s Department.

This has been an overlong introduction to the point of my story, which is that it does not seem to be equally traditional for son to follow father or brother to follow brother into the field of law enforcement.

To be sure, we have a new Commissioner of Police (Mr W.J. McLaren) who was one of two brothers, both inspectors, in the Victorian Force.

There was the fine example of Sergeant Robert Stott and his son, the late Gordon Stott, who gave the N.T. Force 87 years’ service between them.

Sergeant Pat Salter, who has been here for 12 years, has been joined by his nephew, Constable Peter Salter – a graduate from the last recruit school and now with the Traffic Section, Darwin.

But it is not at all usual for more than one member of a family to undertake Police work. When one finds brothers who are both Sergeants in the N.T. Force, it is probably a unique situation.

The brothers, of course, are Sergeant K. Patrick Grant, 35, and Sergeant Arthur A. (“Saus.”) Grant 29.

Pat Grant is Station Sergeant at Darwin. “Saus” is with Darwin C.I.B.

How did it happen? Pat came to the Force in 1956 after being recruited in New South Wales.

In 1959 he married Miss Lynette Paige at the Catholic Church Alice Springs.

“Saus”, who had been working in the Commonwealth Bank, Sydney, came to Alice Springs to be his brother’s Best Man.

He liked the Territory and decided to stay – not only to stay but to join his brother in the Police Force.

He applied at once and within three months was accepted.

But it is only in recent months, since then, that the brothers have worked in the same town.

Pat has served at Alice Springs, Hatches Creek Mataranka, Tennant Creek and Lake Nash. “Saus” has been in Darwin, Maranboy and Pine Creek.

Pat was promoted to Sergeant in 1960. He and his wife have four children.

“Saus” got his three stripes in January this year. On St. Patrick’s Day, 1962, he married Miss Norma Bailey at Wellington N.S.W. She was one of the first group of five Policewomen to work in the Northern Territory. They have two children.

It only needs to be added that both are intending to stay. (Citation June 1967 – Page 36)

ON PATROL – PINE CREEK. A.A.GRANT

“Friday morning, early, I’m leaving.” No-one knows the panic this statement can produce when it’s made in the vicinity of the Pine Creek Police Station. On the clothesline there appears a variety of items – swag, swag-cover, blanket, bush mosquito net and various other colourful odds and ends.

“Bobby (Tracker), get im axe, shovel, fry pan, kettle and put im in that box. Fill im up that water tank on that truck – now put im all in that box, not banging around in the back of the truck.”

From upstairs comes; “Hey, do you want three or four tins of sausages and vegies in your tucker box?”

“I told you last time I don’t want sausages, I want steak and vegies.”

“All right, all right, everything is in now; I remembered the salt and the tin opener this time.”

At last (relief for all) the time arrives and with much waving and so on, the Toyota rolls off down the road – on patrol.

The Pine Creek Police district covers an area of eighteen thousand square miles, and on this patrol I will be covering the north-eastern corner, which is a veritable tourist paradise.

The first calling place is Mary Station, which covers an area of 860 square miles. The homestead, situated on the Mary River, is typical of the station homes, being a corrugated iron building with dirt floor, iron door and windows which are never shut. There are the inevitable dozens of dogs, and old Jamus Peters has the full-time occupation of keeping dogs and goats from entering the house.

The pattern of the travelling Policeman’s work is set here and follows much the same course at all stations – the registration of dogs, firearms and motor vehicles and the issuing of drivers’ licences and Miners’ rights.

The next port of call is Goodparla Station, now owned by American interests and managed by a rangy, red-haired native of California, Lee Grover. This station is fifteen hundred square miles, and its vast area is roamed by large numbers of buffalo, cattle and brumbies.

There are still more miles to travel before making camp for the night and the road leads on across the South Alligator River to the Jim Jim Creek Crossing. Here Tom and Judy Opitz have established a store to serve the tourists and locals. The interesting thing about this store, build of fibro on brick and cement stilts, is that it has to be abandoned in the “Wet” when the Jim Jim floods, and its occupants retreat to their dry camp some five miles away on the opposite side of the creek. This is the end of the first day, so off comes some of the gear, the fire is lit and on goes the stew. As this, with its freshwater billabongs and excellent barramundi fishing grounds, is a popular camping spot, there is plenty of company: on this occasion a city taxi-driver, a doctor and two businessmen on a “get-away-from-it-all” holiday.

But the mosquitoes don’t allow for much socialising, so very soon it’s up with the mosquito net and into the swag and a good night’s sleep under the stars.

Daybreak and out of the swag, get the fire going, put the billy on and some of last night’s leftover stew for breakfast. Then down to the lagoon for a bath whilst keeping both eyes open just in case a long grey snout may be nosing out of the mud.

This day is spent patrolling the safari camps – Nourlangie run by Alan Stewart, Muirella Park run by Frank Muir and Patoonga owned by Don McGregor, aptly termed by visiting American tourists as Australia’s Daniel Boone. Don’s showplace lodge of pine and bamboo situated on a huge natural lagoon is in an idyllic setting of tropical trees, scrubs and flowers which include paw-paws, mangoes, bougainvilleas and many more too numerous to mention. A holiday on a safari camp such as this offers hunting, fishing, shooting, photography and opportunities to study all bird and wildlife.

Woolwonga Reserve is a Wild Life Sanctuary through which one is only allowed to travel on the public road, or otherwise to tour on a permit being granted. Here we see Northern Territory wildlife at its greatest. There is the ‘Goose Camp’ where there are thousands upon thousands of geese, ducks, ibises, cranes, pelicans and other water fowl. When these are disturbed, the air is filled with thousands of flapping wings and the noise is deafening. Across the path comes a long-legged, long-necked scrub turkey with such a haughty look, as if to say; “I know I’m protected”. I make camp this second night on the road just short of Mudginberri Station on which I have my sights set for tomorrow.

Mudginberri Station, owned by Mr and Mrs Len Randall, has the best buildings of any of the Stations in our area. There is the owner’s modern brick home, a new Manager’s residence and staff quarters.

Surrounding these buildings are lawns and gardens covering about an area of four acres, with the green lawns sloping gently down to yet another beautiful billabong. There is a well-established buffalo industry at Mudginberri. Up to twenty buffalo a day can be handled here. The shooters go out after the buffalo which they must return to the abattoirs within an hour of being shot; here the slaughter-men

skin, clean and quarter the beast under the critical eye of the Commonwealth Meat Inspector, who is on hand at all times and who stamps the meat. It then goes to the boners, is packed, frozen and either flown or trucked out for eventual sale overseas. There are about 150 natives living here, some of whom gain employment on the Station, and the Government contributes to the upkeep of the remainder.

From Mudginberri I proceed to Canon Hill where there is situated another buffalo abattoir which, although only small, is one of the best and most efficient in the Territory. Here there is a staff of only four white men and three aboriginals. There is Bob Anderson, reputed to be the crack boner in the industry, Nev Collins the all-rounder shooter and engineer, Lenny Opitz truck driver, and floor hand Craig Quartermaine. The meat Inspector is local Stock Inspector Dave Schofield. All business is completed and the next stop is the East Alligator River which makes a good camping place.

On the fourth morning I cross the East Alligator River and am now in Arnhem Land, which is a Native Reserve on which Europeans are not allowed. This fifteen miles from the East Alligator to Oenpelli Mission covers some of the loveliest country in the Northern Territory and even perhaps in Australia. The road skirts Red Lily Lagoon and other excellent water holes. Where the Mudginberri and Canon Hill plains were striking, they are as nothing compared with the flat, open Oenpelli plains, lush and vivid with a thick mat of para grass. The hills appear as if out of nowhere, some are large and beautifully coloured, others small with intricate patterns fashioned by the wind over the millions of years.

For as far as the eye can see there are huge herds of big, fat buffalo, bigger and fatter than any sighted before. The horses and cattle too show the results of living in the land of plenty.

Oenpelli Mission itself, situated on a large billabong, is backed by a range of hills and faces out onto a rolling plain. There is a row of Territory-type houses surrounded by green lawns and colourful gardens. Fresh fruit is always plentiful from the paw-paw, mango and banana trees and the acres of pineapples. It is here I have one of my most interesting evenings as the Rev. Harris recalls the old days, and the names of such Constables as Littlejohn (Ex-Superintendent) and Mannion (now Inspector) are often mentioned. He recalls when these Police rode from Brock's Creek to investigate Aboriginal murders at the Mission, which, after days of investigation, resulted in Police escorting large numbers of prisoners and witnesses on foot to Brock's Creek from where they were transported to Darwin.

This is the end of the track so, as there is only a normal amount of work here on this occasion, I push off in the afternoon to get to East Alligator River to try my luck at fishing. (Wet tail, plenty of mosquito bites, but no fish.) However, to the rescue comes Jack Gibbs, and he gives me three or four fish which are stowed in the "esky".

The last morning of the patrol and a man's a bit weary of it now, as everything's covered in bulldust. Tinned meals leave a lot to be desired, and a hot shower seems the ultimate in luxury.

So its home, James, and don't spare the horsepower. (Citation – December 1966 – Pages 37 and 38)

SIR ROBERT PEEL - Quote

1853 From His Private Papers

The real truth is, the number of convicts is too overwhelming for the means of proper and effectual punishment. I despair of any remedy but that which I wish I could hope for - a great reduction in the amount of crime.



Figure 6 Sir Robert Peel

<https://www.nytimes.com/2014/04/16/nyregion/a-london-guide-for-1-police-plaza.html>

BAN THE BEER ?

"No fool is silent in his cups", according to an old proverb, and Bomb-banner Bertrand Russell says: "Drunkenness is a temporary suicide; the happiness it brings is merely negative, a momentary cessation of unhappiness".

On the other hand, an adjoining frothblower echoes Harvard psychiatrist, Morris E. Chafetz: "Alcohol is a boon to mankind; it promotes health, makes life less nasty, improves the company, and eases the load of moral obligation."

This ought to clarify the arguments of those for and against late or later night!

(Citation – June 1967 – Page 18)

A HEROINE OF BORROLOOLA

WITH the Borroloola Policeman away on patrol his wife took the message from the native runner. On a page torn from a small exercise book stark tragedy was recorded in half a dozen lines:

"Dear Heathcock,

Shot myself accidentally, think I am settled. Can you come out.

Shot the bone in two above the knee, may bleed to death.

If you see me you had better come at once.

It is a case for the plane immediately –

Foster."

The note had been written four days earlier, by Horace Mole Foster, at his camp on the Wearyan River, 60 miles of river and 15 miles of sea from Borroloola. It was late in February 1941, and the middle of the Wet season with its storms, rains, floods and bogs. Mrs Heathcock radioed the Flying Doctor at Cloncurry, Queensland, and the plane arrived on the following day with the news that it was unable to land at the Wearyan because of the long grass and boggy ground on the unprepared airstrip.

Ruth Heathcock was a trained nursing sister who had first come to the Northern Territory many years before with the Australian Inland Mission. She had no doubts about where her duty lay now. She organised a party consisting of herself, Roger Jose – one of the famous "Borroloola Hermits" – his aboriginal wife and two male aboriginals to travel by dugout to give aid to the stricken Foster.

After three days and three nights of stormy and dangerous travel they reached him. He was beyond all hope of recovery, but she nursed him for 8 days and supported him in his bushman's faith that the Flying Doctor plane would arrive in time.

At 3.00p.m. on 2nd March Foster died. One hour and twenty minutes later the Flying Doctor landed beside the camp.

Happening in 1941 this episode went unnoticed and almost forgotten against the greater tragedy of those days. Official records of Police and other Government branches in Darwin were crated up and packed off to distant parts considered safe from likely enemy action. It was 1946 before the report of the shooting, and inquest details, came out of its particular crate and, fortunately, got into the right hands. The Superintendent of Police, Alfred Victor Stretton, had endorsed the report in his usual neat handwriting to draw attention to Ruth Heathcock's "epic of endurance".

The then Commissioner of Police, and Administrator of the Northern Territory, Charles Lydiard Aubrey Abbott, forwarded details to Canberra without delay, stating: "I do not know whether her conduct comes within the ambit of the civil George Medal, I hope it does and I recommend accordingly."

In due course, this outstanding effort in the cause of mercy was recognised by the award of the M.B.E. to Mrs Heathcock.

By that time her husband, Constable Ted Heathcock had died and she returned to South Australia. She still lives in Adelaide.



Needless Tragedy

The tragedy, as is so often the case, should never have happened. Horace Mole Foster was a bushman with a lifetime of experience with firearms. He was an intelligent, well-read man. (Like his friend, Bill Harney, he had swallowed most of the famous Carnegie Library established at Borroloola in the late 1890's by the efforts of Police Corporal Power.) He spent years on cattle stations, and years in trepaning around the Gulf of Carpentaria and adjacent waters. He could discuss, and spout slabs of, Horace and numerous other of the old classical writers and would do so without much prompting, in the camp, on the deck of his lugger, or riding along through the bush on horseback.

In the 1930's he leased a saltpan at Manangoora, on the Wearyan River and set up his permanent camp there in paperbark huts. With a native consort and numerous native friends and helpers he lived a surprisingly comfortable and contented life on the proceeds of the salt pan, the products of his garden and catches from a generous sea and river.

On a day in the Wet season of 1941 he handed a shotgun to one of the natives to get some ducks for the camp larder, but the gun already had a misfired cartridge jammed in the breech. Efforts to remove it were unsuccessful. Foster lost patience and angrily exclaimed: "I'll smash the thing – it's a danger to everybody." He smashed the butt savagely on to the ground. The shot discharged, shattering his leg

above the knee. He collapsed in a welter of blood, with his knee grotesquely doubled at a right angle beneath his body.

Despite shock, pain and loss of blood, he remained conscious. He scribbled a note to a bushman friend, Norman McIntyre, further up the river, and another – already quoted – to Constable Heathcock at Borroloola, where the nearest pedal radio was located.

Neither McIntyre nor the aborigines at the camp could do anything medically useful to assist Foster, but struggled to get the airstrip into reasonable condition. The shattered limb was still doubled under Foster's body when Mrs Heathcock arrived, by which time it was septic to an extreme degree. In the two days preceding his death his jaws locked and artificial feeding had to be improvised. On 2nd March he died.

Heroic Women Pioneers

Many women in the early days of the North, in the ordinary course of their everyday lives, performed actions which were taken pretty well for granted under the prevailing circumstances, but on a present-day assessment would be classed as of super-human quality. In a sense it was a form of heroism just to live and rear their families in the primitive, almost entirely comfortless conditions. Few of their deeds have been recorded properly; most have not been recorded at all. It was almost a fluke, indeed, that Mrs Heathcock's effort happened to come under notice again at a time when it could be given due recognition.

An old mate of Foster's bush and lugger days, Bill Harney, often told the story of that mercy trip down the river and across the open sea, and in his book "North of 23°" he gave it fitting dramatic treatment. Referring to Ruth Heathcock, he wrote:-

"Remember that name and think of the time and place, for this woman went out to help the wounded man on the Wearyan River. A white man, Roger Jose, travelled to assist her, and well he did his job, as he was an expert with the native people and canoes. So they sailed for the Wearyan River, a distance of over eighty miles down-river and across the open sea in the monsoon season. Perhaps you are snug and sheltered as you read this tale; your fire is burning should it be cold. The white sheets are wrapped well around you in your warm bed, so that you cannot feel the greatness of this deed as do people who have travelled and lived in these parts.

"The canoe, a hollowed-out log of wood, cut by a native craftsman, was about seventeen feet long by two feet wide with a freeboard of a few inches in a calm sea. You thrill at the boats as they race in harbours and bays, the crew leaning far out to balance their craft; but think of this hollow log of wood setting out to take help to an injured man with a woman nurse aboard. Have you ever been down coastal rivers in flood time, the waters rolling over and then twisting around and around in eddies till the blackman believes a serpent lives beneath that spot to suck down the foolish man who would ride these waters at that time? They even say that the muddy waters are the blood of the serpent who can destroy. On come trees, rolling over and over in the current so that the backwaters have to be travelled to escape these dangers. Now comes the swishing monsoon rain: swish, swish, cold and bitter it blows, till the people in that canoe shiver and would return did they not know their duty lies ahead. Backwards is the path of the craven, ahead is destiny.

"Darkness comes down, yet ever onwards they go, down into the tidal area, where the fetid mangroves appear to lean out over the water as though they were giants ranged there to stay the speeding canoe. Swiftly around the bend they go, past sleeping crocodiles, who rouse themselves with a start and leap frantically into the water with a splash, almost upsetting the canoe. Dugongs rise and give a load snort as they expel air to take in more. Queer noises come from the mangroves' muddy flats: the clack, clack of shellfish and the swish and the sigh of wind in the crab holes. The sea lies ahead. They await the high tide so as to cross the shallow waters to reach the Wearyan River, ten miles away, for their craft is too frail to breast the heavy seas outside. On they travel: the adventures of that journey were many, but all are overcome and at last they reach the Wearyan River and Manangoora.

"Forgotten were the perils of the trip: the job was there. Quickly the nurse's eye could see that Horace was beyond all aid. Too long had he been there without medical assistance, so, easing his last hours on earth, she carried on those traditions of the Australian Inland Mission."



Matrimony at Mataranka! A wedding in that tiny settlement is still big news. This 1929 group shows Ted and Ruth Heathcock newly married, on the right, with Father Docherty, centre, and Mr Constable Frank Sheriden and his wife.

(Citation June 1967 – Pages 3-5)

TRANSCRIPT FROM A LETTER WRITTEN BY SGT AMBROSE WHITE TO HIS BROTHR DICK (RICHARD WHITE – QUORN)

POLICE STATION, TIMBER CREEK

JAN 16TH 1911

Dear Dick,

Mail arrived 14th, 3 days late owing to floods. Received 3 wires from you, thanks for good wishes and (unreadable).

So Phenie and the kiddies are South. I hope they are doing ok. I got no letter from you this mail but as a boat was to arrive in Darwin on 12, I guess it carries some letters for me but I will have to wait another 6 weeks for them.

I presume this Soprano that won the double is your property, where did you pick her up? You seem to get hold of some good sorts. My luck is right out with race horses. I swapped Scotty away for a beautiful chestnut colt that came from Commonwealth, he won the flying there. He got a slight stone bruise and could not travel, I thought I was making a good deal. I got his leg right but about a week after he got bad and died, so I fell in for once.

I also lost a nice 2 year old draught colt about the same time, a good few horses are dying lately, I think that "Fitzroy Disease" is beginning to spread out this way.

It interferes with the profits when you lose a few.

Well I had a memo from HQ's saying that the Commonwealth have taken over the N.T. and all officers who did not wish to be taken over with it, would have the opportunity of applying for a transfer before the end of June. I have bunged in an application for transfer but I don't think they will let me get away before June, as so many are going South, I think they are sure to keep all officers in charge of stations here as long as they can. I don't know where they will get police for here to stay.

However if all goes well, I will see you smiling in 5 or 6 months.

I returned home from the oil expedition a couple of days before New Year. I found the place and brought in samples but I can't say whether it is oil or no, there was too much water to see anything. 16 inches of rain fell while we were out, so you can guess what sort of trip we had, bogging through mud and swimming rivers all day, laying in a wet swag and watching for niggers at night, they are there in hundreds, we killed one horse and I would not give much for the mob when we returned. I would not take the trip on in the wet season again for all the rice in China. The odds were against me owing to the early rains. I am the only one who got there. They have been trying to find this place since 1904 but all had to beat a hasty retreat.

We got to Auvergne Station Xmas Eve and spelled a bit. John Skeahan the manager is a good old sort and made us very welcome but the dammed old cook got to the drop of Xmas cheer 2 days before Xmas and what he didn't drink he planted, so we all had to do a bit towards cooking the dinner. One of the stockman, a nephew of the commissioner "Victor Raymond" found a plant of 3 bottles, so we just had enough for an appetiser before dinner.

To give you an idea of the characters one meets in the bush, this cook is a full blown Barrister and a son of the Attorney General "Sydney". Drink seems to be his failing, so like many more he drifted to the

N.T.

I had a letter from Ed (brother) but it was written on Oct 27th. Suppose there is some later news for me in Darwin. They were all well then. I have not heard yet how the harvest panned out.

Now that I have made up my mind to go home, I am anxious for the time to slip around. I may possibly get away before June. Will ring off now,

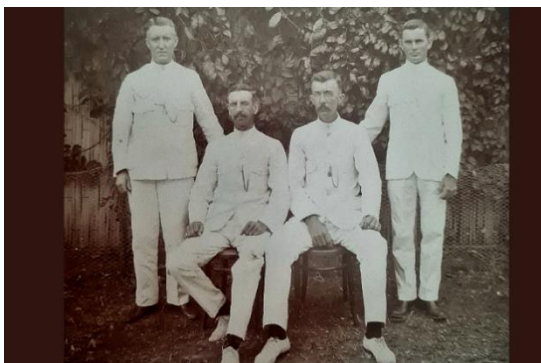
Hoping to see you all soon

I remain with love to all

Your Fond Bro Ambrose White



*Figure 7 Ambrose White and
Aboriginal Tracker at Timber
Creek*



Ambrose White, Bill Miller, Bill Johns, Reg Reed. Timber Creek Police Station 1911

TV MURDER – DOREEN CARSWELL

POLICEMEN have no friends, they say. A pity, because they have such fascinating tales to tell. Get one by a glowing fire with a glass of something at his elbow to warm him after his routine round to ensure that all is quiet in the township, and you'll soon forget the lateness of the hour and the nip in the outside air.

Such was the case with our often-misunderstood local cop, Constable Pearson. Until he stretched his long legs along our hearth we hadn't realised how large he was, and until he began relating some of his experiences we hadn't a clue as to the wealth of stories pigeonholed in his memory.

"Take that case a while back, soon after TV came to the country," Don prodded him, refilling glasses busily, "If I remember, you had a public pat on the back from the Police Chief for your work in clearing up the mystery. How'd you do it?"

The big man looked pleased, but a little uncomfortable. We wondered if he'd dodge the question altogether, but he sipped at his drink and, staring into the fire, began the tale.

"There was this fine old home a few miles out. Wealthy couple with one grown-up nephew. They had no children of their own and had adopted this nephew. Idolised him. Quite a good type of lad, too. Knew he'd come into the property eventually and really pulled his weight keeping it up to scratch...."

We waited while the Constable took another sip, then listened in pin-drop silence as he went on.

"Mother was a real social highlight. Loved the highspots, dashed to the city for first nights. Pictures in the social pages. All that stuff...."

Don poked at the fire and fidgeted, devoutly hoping the Constable wasn't going to leave the story there! "They had this young woman as a housekeeper," he went on, "Deserted wife or something. No one quite knew her history. Called herself Mrs Dashwood. She had separate quarters at the back of the house. Even cooked her own meals and had them on her own."

Rearranging his long legs, the Constable continued, "The upshot was that this housekeeper – thirty-fivish, she was – was found dead in her bed from an overdose of barbiturates. She'd been off-colour all day with the flu and Mrs Aspinall, the lady of the house, had given her the day off. Apparently the housekeeper was rather addicted to headache powders because there was a lot of evidence of this kind in and around her bedside table. Her favourite kind of pain relief was the crushed powder type that's wrapped in paper. Mrs Aspinall told us her housekeeper had always 'sworn by' these for relief of headaches and colds."

We murmured suitable monosyllables, Don threw on another log and we drew our chairs closer to the blaze.

"It would seem as if it was suicide. An open and shut case, wouldn't it?" Don asked.

Constable Pearson gave a half-grin. "We only pronounce that verdict as a last resort. I myself wasn't satisfied with that notion. I couldn't see what reason Mrs Dashwood could have for taking her own life."

"Wasn't there some gossip earlier that the nephew had fallen for Mrs Dashwood?" I put in.

"That's just it. There was. And Mrs A. wouldn't have tolerated that. She had her own plans for Derek. A big society wedding. All the frills. She'd never have accepted any romance between Derek and Mrs Dashwood."

"But surely," Don interrupted, "she wouldn't be so desperate as to resort to murder?"

Our friend shrugged. "Well, she was. Analysis of the tablet papers lying nearby proved that one had contained powdered phenobarb. The rest had contained A.P.C."

"It was assumed then that Mrs Aspinall had given Mrs Dashwood her crushed 'headache powder' with a sweet smile and the poor victim had swallowed it in good faith?" Don queried.

"She admitted it," the Constable said, "Later, of course. Quite a deal later."

"I remember now," Don said, frowning. "There was a lot to it. I read the account in the paper. But it was never quite clear how you came to pin the murder on Mrs A. She didn't wilt and confess straight away, did she?"

"She'd hardly be the type to do that!" I said.

"Most unlikely!" agreed our friend, feeling for his pipe and tobacco and lighting up comfortably. "It was a long, slow process. She stuck rigidly to the story that she'd prepared the evening meal herself on account of Mrs Dashwood's illness, and that all three of them – herself, her husband and nephew – were having their tea in front of the TV set at the time it was estimated Mrs D. had died. At about 8 o'clock that evening she reported having found the woman dead when she visited her room to take her a lemon drink."

“Well then, *how?*” demanded Don, intrigued.

“If they were all watching TV, how could Mrs A. have slipped out and administered the fatal dose?” I asked.

“They weren’t all watching TV at all! Only the two men were eating in the TV room. Mrs A. was in and out of it, fetching extra spoons and things, but she didn’t actually sit and watch TV.”

“And she admitted this at last? That must have been a major breakthrough?” suggested Don.

“But how did you finally get Mrs A. on the wood?”

“Quite simple really,” the Constable grinned, “I called unexpectedly one late afternoon, almost teatime. Went to the kitchen doorway. The first thing I noticed when Mrs A. invited me in was two trays set out in readiness for the evening meal. On the kitchen table was a place mat.”

“But what did that convey?” we asked, puzzled.

“It showed that two people were in the habit of regularly having their evening meal in front of the TV in the other room. The third person just as regularly ate in the quiet of the kitchen.”

“I see. And the third person was Mrs Aspinall. She could easily slip out to the housekeeper’s quarters without the other being aware of it.”

“That’s it exactly. She admitted the lot that day. As soon as I’d spotted the two trays she knew the game was up.”

“But how did you know she wasn’t one of the regular TV viewers?” Don insisted. “For all you know, it could have been her husband who preferred to eat alone, away from the set.”

“That’s where my pigeonhole memory came in handy,” said the Constable, reliving his moment of triumph as the case was solved, I’d remembered standing in the Post Office near Mrs A. soon after TV came in. We were both buying licences. I asked her how she liked having TV in the home....”

“Yes?” I prompted, eagerly. This was better than any old paperback. This was real, this was earnest.

“I remember it well,” he said in reply. “She shrugged her shoulders and said scathingly, “TV is for men and morons. I never watch it. I’m not interested in it and never will be!”

Constable Pearson trapped his pipe on the ashtray, saying softly, “I remembered her words. And then, of course....I knew.”

(Citation – December, 1967 – Pages 42 and 43)

DEATH OF AN EXTRAORDINARY BLOKE

Arthur “John” Gordon, a true “bush” policeman, died on November 14, 2008. He began his career in March 1936 as a junior constable with SA Police and was sworn in as a constable in the NT Police Force in November 1947. He was a

forceful advocate for more comprehensive resources for police. In 1956, following a (successful) search for a crashed plane and missing pilot in the Mataranka district, he made representation – in very strong terms – to his superintendent re the lack of personnel and equipment to undertake such an exercise. John Gordon’s name is inevitably associated with Timber Creek; to this day people he met while serving there identify John and his wife, Jessie, as close personal friends. His interests extended well beyond his police duties to conservation and preservation. In 1958, in a comprehensive report on Gregory’s Bottle Tree close to a bank of the Victoria River, he suggested that this historic site be taken over by the Northern Territory Reserves Board “before the whole camp site will have floated down the river and a very valuable historical landmark will be gone forever”. After resigning in 1963 he subsequently wrote his memoirs entitled *Just An Ordinary Bloke*.

(Citation May 2009 Pg2)



INFILTRATION

In early 1941, Darwin still felt far removed from the war. Although a fair number of servicemen were stationed in the area, most of them were bored from the lack of action. Some A.I.F. units even staged demonstrations in hopes of being deployed overseas, where the real fighting was taking place.

This was the pre-blitz era—before Japan entered the war and thrust the Top End of the Northern Territory into the front line.

At the time, money was flowing freely, and business was booming. Hotels were busy, and gambling schools—attended by both civilians and servicemen—were thriving. When police raided and shut one down, another would soon take its place.

As a newly-promoted Acting Sergeant, I often found myself in charge of these raids.

We received a tip-off about a new gambling school set up near the R.A.A.F. Aerodrome at the 4½-Mile. Superintendent Stretton instructed me to carry out a reconnaissance in preparation for a raid.

One evening, I set out with Constable Fred Lullfitz. We parked our vehicle in the scrub, a good distance from the Aerodrome, and continued on foot. The school was easy to locate—just outside the Aerodrome's perimeter. It stood in a relatively open area, with the nearest scrub about a hundred yards behind it. The structure was a makeshift building of timber and hessian, with a single entrance sheltered by a porch.

A well-worn track ran from the Aerodrome to the school. Men—mostly civilians, with a few Air Force personnel—walked this path in ones, twos, and threes. At the time, civilian contractors were constructing buildings for the R.A.A.F., and many were camped nearby.

Every so often, a man would exit the building, carrying a large 3-cell electric torch. He'd walk a circuit around the building, shining his light in all directions before taking a seat in the porch.

"That looks like the Nit Keeper," I said to Fred.

I continued watching and eventually noted, "He does a round about every ten minutes. After his next one, we'll move in closer—try to get a look inside, see how many are there, and who's running the game."

When the Nit Keeper returned to his post, Fred and I crept closer to the building's rear. Peering through a gap in the hessian, we saw a crowd of civilians and a few Air Force men gathered around a green-covered table. At the head of the table sat the banker, with a pile of money in front of him. I recognized him as a well-known gambling racketeer.

Just then, I accidentally kicked an empty tin, which clattered loudly. Fred and I dashed for cover as the Nit Keeper and another man rushed out.

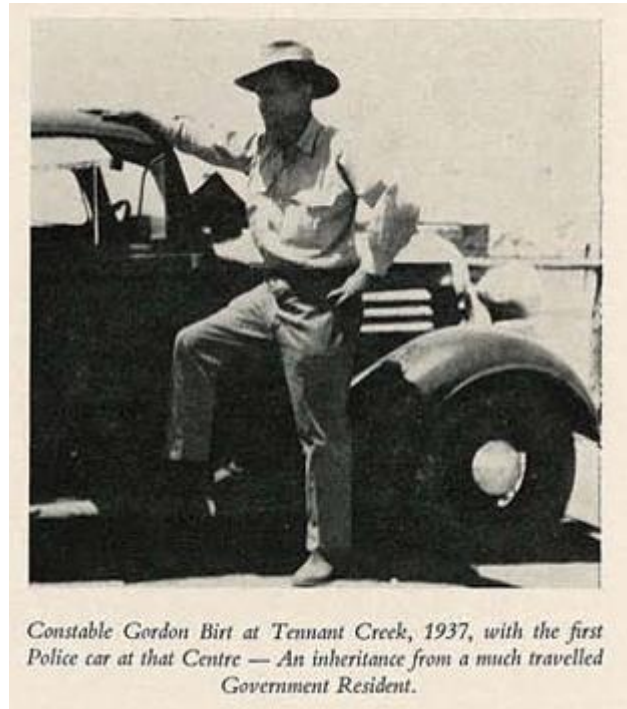
I didn't see where Fred went, but I dove under a bush. From my hiding place, I heard two men pass by, one sweeping the torch beam back and forth.

"I'm sure I saw someone run into the scrub," one said.

"Maybe it was just a kangaroo," replied the other.

After a bit more searching, they returned to the school. I made my way back to the police car and, a few minutes later, Fred joined me. We headed back to Darwin to prepare for the raid.

Two nights later—on pay night—we returned with a party of seven or eight constables. None of us were in uniform. Most wore khaki shorts and shirts with rubber-soled shoes. We gathered on a slight rise, about 150 yards from the north-west side of the gambling school—just outside the reach of the Nit Keeper's torch beam.



Fred, my second-in-command, and I discussed tactics. Before joining the NT Police, Fred had served with the WA Police. He was experienced, and his younger brother, Henry, also a constable, was part of the raid.

"The Nit Keeper seems alert tonight, Sergeant," Fred noted. "He's doing his rounds more often than every ten minutes."

"Yes," I agreed. "And he's focusing more on the rear of the building—almost like he expects a raid."

Then I said, "I've got a plan. Ever heard of infiltration?"

Fred nodded. "Yes—it's a tactic being used in the war. The idea is that lone men can slip through enemy lines more easily than a large force. They regroup behind enemy lines and attack from the rear."

"Exactly," I said. "That's what we'll do. Those walking to and from the school are mostly civilians. Our men will each go in alone, mingling with the crowd and entering the building one by one. Once inside, they'll take up positions around the table, with one near the entrance. I'll go in last and arrest the banker. We'll take down everyone's names for summonses. Got it?"

"Right," Fred said. "Let's give it a try."

Following instructions, the first constable made a wide loop onto the path and casually walked into the school alongside a couple of men.

"He's in," I said. "Henry, you're next. Fred, you'll go just before me."

Everything went smoothly. The Nit Keeper barely glanced at the constables as they passed. He continued his rounds, torch in hand, focusing on the scrub.

Just after he returned to his packing-case seat in the porch, I walked past, right behind a workman.

Inside, I moved through the crowd and approached the banker from behind.

I grabbed the money on the table. "Police here. Phil L _____, you're under arrest. Everyone stay put—we'll be taking your names."

No one escaped. Civilians, soldiers, and several Air Force men were all caught.

Phil L _____, the banker, took it calmly. He was a tall, solid man—rumoured to be a former State policeman.

"Of course, I'm only the manager here," he said.

"Yes, I know," I replied. "You can call your principals from the station so they can arrange bail. We'll count the money there—it looks to be around two hundred pounds. It'll be forfeited to the Crown upon conviction."

As we drove to the station, I remarked, "You know, Phil, that was the easiest gambling raid I've ever done. I don't know how we got everyone in without being noticed. Didn't you have a Nit Keeper?"

"Nit Keepers," he snorted. "They're not worth two bob a dozen."

(Gordon Birt)

(Citation December 1966 – Pages 3 and 4)

THE SHOWSTOPPER!

He was sent to a town where the natives were not exactly bushrangers but were, nevertheless, very very unfriendly towards Policemen.

To show them his neutral flag and prove what a good, public-spirited sport he could be, he took his wife along to a performance by the local Amateur Dramatic Society. All the best people were there and a lot of others as well, thus providing a good chance to prove how well he could mix socially.

After the first Act he found it necessary to make a patrol, so he proceeded to the nearest exit and asked the doorkeeper to direct him to That Place. He was told to go around to the back of the stage, turn left and head for a big tree about 20 yards in the distant, then left again for about 15 yards, and there it was. He did this with some difficulty – you know just how dark it can be around the back of a country hall – but eventually felt comfortable enough to return to his seat. As he pushed past the last of the jutting feet and squeezed in alongside his wife, he whispered into the darkness where her ear ought to be:

"Has the second Act finished already?"

"You ought to know", she replied sweetly, "you were IT".

(Citation December 1966 – Page 20)

THE OUTCOME OF SUPREME COURT CASES – EXCERPT

In the Supreme Court... **CROWN:** It was quite clear that all the people in the settlement had been drinking, and drinking to excess.

Your Honor, she got back, and later that night she went to go to bed and found her husband...lying on a mattress with the (now) dead woman...(they) were lying under the same blanket, apparently asleep, and it is relevant to say that both people were under the influence of liquor.

Now on seeing this, the prisoner...immediately lost her temper.

Unfortunately there was a piece of mulga stick, about a metre in length, lying on the ground nearby.

She picked up that piece of stick and started to beat both (her husband) and the (now) dead woman.

DEFENCE: I would submit in these sorts of situations the principle of deterrence should not apply, and as a principle of punishment would have no effect whatsoever.

As Your Honor, no doubt already appreciates, drink is an enormous problem with some Aboriginal communities and what flows from the drink is all too often this sort of thing.

That is quite apart from any other questions of infidelity.

The only other principles of sentencing which Your Honor may feel is relevant is the principle of retribution.

In my submission, retribution in these sorts of circumstances has no effect because she is an elderly woman.

In my submission, a further sentence of imprisonment will really have no beneficial effect. It will mean the prisoner spends a period of time in jail with people who do not speak her own language.

It will not bring home a lesson, in my submission, to Aborigines in the way of general deterrence.

JUDGE: She had been drinking and was probably drunk. It is not unnatural to expect, in those circumstances, that she lost her temper; and she picked up, apparently, the first thing which presented itself to her – a piece of stick which was on the ground – and started to beat both her husband and the deceased with the stick. There are many other mitigating factors in this case. I do not propose to go into them because it is not a case which in my view could possibly call for a custodial sentence. She acted under what I would regard as extreme provocation in the circumstances and her violent reaction and her loss of self-control were probably aggravated by the fact that she had consumed a lot of alcohol. She has already served two months in jail and in all of the circumstances I do not propose to require her to serve any more time in jail. I order that, without passing sentence upon her, she be released upon her, giving security by recognisance herself in the sum of \$20 that she will be of good behaviour for a period of one year from today. (NT Police News April 2007)

OFF-DUTY OFFICERS PRAISED – Katherine TWO male off-duty police officers dining out last night in Katherine showed their dedication to duty by pursuing an offender resulting in the arrest of an 18-year-old man. At about 7.45 pm the man entered the car park of the Katherine Motel where he allegedly interfered with a Mitsubishi Triton utility by stealing a pick from the open rear tray. He then entered the motel reception area, allegedly still in possession of the pick, where a 52-year-old female employee was working in one of the offices. The woman ran out of the office and the offender allegedly stole her purse from one of the desks. The man then allegedly proceeded to walk into the woman's residence which is adjoined to the reception area but left the area through a side door ending up in a blocked walkway, before climbing onto the roof of the motel. He was pursued by the two off-duty officers, who had been dining in the motel restaurant, and apprehended on Chambers Drive a short time later. Police arrested the man and conveyed him to the Katherine Police Station where he is expected to be charged later today. Officer in Charge of Katherine Police Station, A/Senior Sergeant Willem Westra van Holthe, has praised the efforts of the two officers concerned. "These officers showed great dedication to duty and making the decision to chase the offender whilst off-duty was a gutsy call and highly commendable," he said. (NT Police News April 2007)

VERITY IN ELEGY

I don't know what sort of history is taught in our schools now but in my day bloody battles were the milestones by which we marked the onward march of time.

One of the best-remembered was the Capture of Quebec by General Wolfe, whose troops scaled the heights in the darkness of night to attack the French. Both Wolfe and his opposite number, Montcalm, were killed.

A sidelight of the severer shades of tragedy was that whilst waiting for the right moment to send his troops up the cliffs, Wolfe paced the deck of his ship reading Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard", a poem which so impressed him that he exclaimed:

"I would rather be the author of that poem than take Quebec."

In the fluctuation of later history, 1941 again found the British fighting the French – this time in Syria. The South Australian 2/27 Battalion, E.I.F., was given the task of dislodging the French – mainly the famous Foreign Legion – from the rugged coastal hills. There were several Territorians in the Unit, including a member of our Force and a surveyor's offsider from Tennant Creek, who were in the same platoon.

At one stage the Battalion spent the greater part of an entire night clambering in the rocky hills to get into position for an attack on Saisa (Sidon). As they struggled up to the crest of a particularly rugged peak in the middle of the night one of the Territorians wasted enough valuable breath to crack: "This climbing the heights in the dark to attack the French reminds me of Wolfe at Quebec."

"Yairs", came the tired response. "It makes me feel like Wolfe, too – I'd rather be home writing Gray's 'Elegy'."

(Citation – June 1967 – Page 18)



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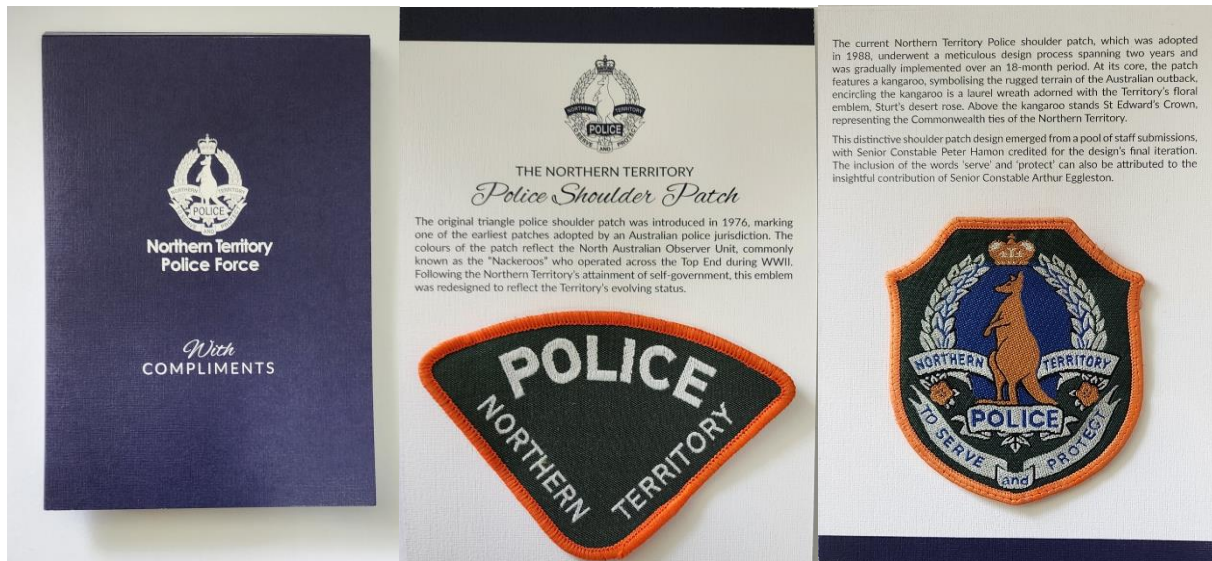
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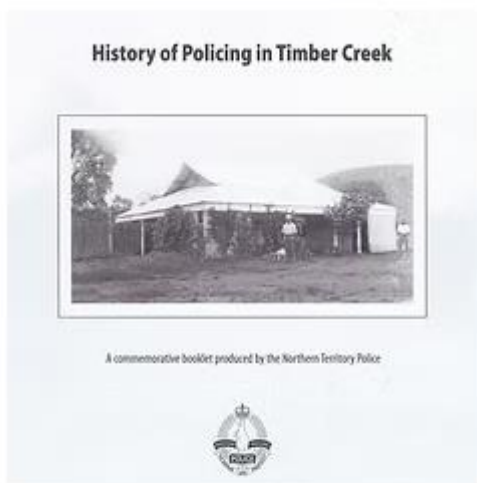
MERCHANDISE

If you are interested in the history of policing in the Northern Territory, the NT Police Museum and Historical Society has two publications and a coin you can purchase. These items make great gifts!

To purchase yours go onto the website store at:
<https://www.ntpmhs.com.au/all-products>

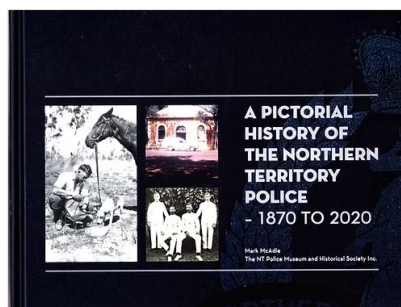


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