

the CITATION

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY POLICE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NT POLICE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

PRESIDENT'S REPORT 1997

Dear Members,

This year has been quiet, as we adjust to the departure of our tireless Secretary, Sgt. Glenys Simpson. Glenys is in Adelaide, enjoying final leave before retirement. Her knowledge, energy, and skill, are all greatly missed. We wish Glenys all the best for retirement.

On a brighter note, "Citation" continues to bind members together, and attracts a wide range of articles. Our thanks to Sgt. Garth Macpherson for his efforts.

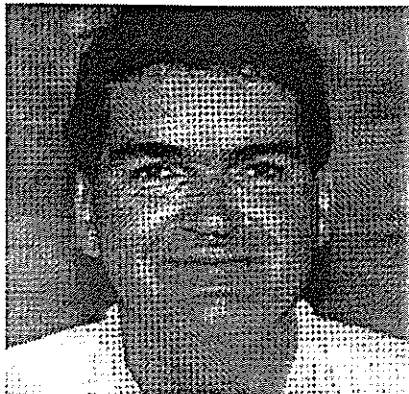
Members will be pleased to note that retired Police Officers have banded together to form an Association, with Peter Hamon as Chairman. Their group has identified about 90 retired members still living. We hope that we can approach these retirees in due course, and capture their reminiscences.

On a sadder note, retired Senior Inspector Bill McKinnon died in Queensland earlier this year. Bill had become a "father figure" to N.T. Police. It is noteworthy that Bill was the last person to join the Central Australian Police in 1931. A few months later, the Central Australian Police and North Australian Police were amalgamated to form the Northern Territory Mounted Police. The "mounted" was dropped in 1933. Bill was a newly promoted OIC of Darwin Station when it was bombed on 19th February, 1942. Bill was involved in the "Petrov" incident at Darwin Airport - quite a contrast to his early days as a camel patrolman.

I wish all members and their families the best for the New Year, and look forward to suggestions as to how the Society might best pursue its objectives.

Peter Thomas

*President Historical
Society*



Letter to the Editor

I have read with interest the articles relating to the exhumation of Harold Bell Lassester as reported in the Citation, Volume 2, No 9, of September 1997 and would like to add a little to them.

I was relieving as Constable, Information and Enquiry Section, Alice Springs in December 1957. In fact I was relieving the only member in Alice Springs attached to that section which evolved into the C.I.B.

I was present at the Alice Springs Police Station when the bones were brought in with much ado and with film crews recording the incident. I received instructions to investigate the matter.

I spoke to Lee Robinson and Alton Frazer at the Police Station. Mr Thomas became immediately unavailable and left for the United States shortly afterwards.

Robinson and Frazer were quite frank about the exhumation of the bones. A film had been made of the route of the finish of Lassester's fatal journey and they had been shown where Lassester had been buried by the Aborigines who were present at the burial by Bob Buck. They had dug up the bones and brought them into the Alice Springs Police Station. This, of course, was common knowledge.

Both men admitted digging up the bones and said they had brought them into Alice Springs for a decent burial. They claimed that they had no idea that this was breaking the law.

Although completely cooperative Robinson and Frazer had matters which required their urgent attention so they were allowed to leave after agreeing to be available for further interview, if required.

The "Sunset Murders" investigation was on at the time and I was instructed to liaise with the South Australian Police and this was a full time job. I had nothing more to do with the exhumation investigation until the Court hearing when I gave evidence. I suppose that Geoff Millgate was given the job.

The file was referred to Crown Law, Darwin where Informations and Summonses were taken out under Common Law.

Continued on page 2



These documents were served on Robinson and Frazer who duly appeared before the Court of Summary Jurisdiction. Alice Springs and were committed for trial.

The Crown did not proceed with these cases and I was told of this by a Crown Law Officer some months later who said that the accused had powerful friends.

The bones were later buried at the Alice Springs cemetery (Memorial Drive) which was then in use, and a prominent headstone erected.

Pat Grant Taree NSW

POLICE MEMORIAL

Research by former Assistant Commissioner Bill Wilson, now a post-graduate history student at NT University, has revealed that the first officer to die while on duty in the Territory was Mounted Constable John Shirley, who, in November 1883, perished from thirst about 100 km north of Tennant Creek telegraph station.

Shirley had led a party of five other white men and two black trackers into the desert to search for the killers of a teamster. Only two of Shirley's party returned to tell the ghastly story of the agonising deaths of their colleagues.

John Shirley had arrived in the Territory in 1879, to take up a posting to Alice Springs, where he was the first police officer. Previously, police presence in the Centre had been limited to Charlotte Waters and Barrow Creek, but a number of "outrages" by Aborigines had led to a clamour for added protection in the Alice Springs area.

Shirley was later transferred to Barrow Creek, and was there in September 1883 when he received instructions to organise a party to search for the killers of teamster Joseph Martin.

Martin, with his partner John Rees had been travelling down the telegraph line south of Powell Creek telegraph station when, on 29 August 1883, they camped on water at Lawson Springs, about two miles off the track. They were accompanied by five friendly Aborigines, who had been joined that day by two strangers.

At about half past ten that night Rees was awakened by a commotion among the Aborigines. Rees found that Martin had been killed, apparently by the strangers.

Rees rushed back to Powell Creek with the news. Police Inspector Foelsche of Darwin soon telegraphed instructions to Shirley to organise a party to capture Martin's killers, but it is not clear why Shirley did not assemble his party until 29 October 1883, two months after the killing.

Shirley was told that the killers had fled toward Anthony Lagoon, and the plan was to set out overland from known water at Attack Creek, north easterly toward Corella Lagoon, where it was known that Harry Readford had a camp. Incidentally, Readford is better known to history as "Captain Starlight", the perpetrator of the theft of more than 1000 cattle from Bowen Downs, in Queensland central west, in 1870.

Shirley's party comprised John Rees, who claimed that he would recognise the killers, bushmen Arthur and George Phillips (who had come to the Territory with the first stock overlanded to Springvale, near Katherine), teamster James Hussey, Alan Giles of Tennant Creek telegraph station, and two black trackers.

The fatal flaw in Shirley's preparations for the expedition was the pack horse which was to carry the water bags - "a very old animal supplied by Powell Creek, quite unfit for the work" Giles later wrote.

On the first day out from the telegraph line an advance party comprising Shirley, Giles, Rees, and one tracker travelled about 30 miles east north east and then made a dry camp in barren scrub. On the second day they travelled six miles before Rees found a native well (called Rees' Well) and water in shallow "crab holes".

Giles was sent back to Attack Creek to bring up the rest of the men, but, ominously, the old pack horse died before the party was joined on the fourth day.

On the fifth day Rees and Hussey scouted forward and were encouraged to find tracks left by Readford, and more crab holes with water. On the sixth day Shirley decided to follow Readford's tracks to Corella waterhole. That day the party travelled thirty five miles, and camped without finding any new water.

On the seventh day the men lost Readford's tracks, and despite seeing water birds and promising blue-bush creeks, they found no surface water. The weather was extremely hot, and that night Shirley decided to immediately retreat to Rees Well.

The men left all their surplus gear hanging in trees, and taking just a little flour, tea, sugar, and three gallons of water they had left, they set out at 6:30 PM for a night march back to Rees Well.

Giles claimed that Shirley led the party too far south during the night, and the next day they had to take a more northerly course. By 8 am on the eighth day it was so hot that the men decided to camp until evening. "The horses were all done up, and four died that afternoon in camp"



Giles wrote.

There was now only one gallon of water left. As the horses died their throats were cut, and most of the men drank the blood which flowed. Giles attributed his own survival to not doing this.

On the ninth day the men split up. The black trackers were sent on to Rees Well to bring back water, and it seems that the white men took refuge under bushes. Giles and Hussey struggled on, after shaking hands with Shirley, who "tried to walk and fell, so we were compelled to say goodbye."

On the tenth day Hussey could go no further, so Giles staggered on for two miles until he collapsed. "I recollect no more until I was roused by the boy pouring water over my head; he managed to get me along for about two miles...when he left me in shade and went for more water."

Giles and the "boy" went back for Hussey, but could get no replies to their coo-ees. Finally, Giles and his sole surviving companion, the tough and faithful but anonymous black tracker, arrived back at Attack Creek, and from there sent messages alerting the outside world to the tragedy.

Soon after, relief parties were sent out, but there was nothing to be done but bury the bodies. Mounted Constable Shirley, the first police officer to die on duty in the Territory, was buried on the banks of Brunchilly Creek, about 40 miles east-north-east of Attack Creek.

contributed by Peter Forrest

DON'T KICK CARTS

After leaving the Northern Territory Police I joined the Commonwealth Public Service and spent several years in South Australia.

Returning to the Territory in 1960 I was appointed District Officer, Katherine in 1963 and subsequently transferred to D.O. Tennant Creek. This was before the advent of local government and the job included management of municipal affairs in the town and, as representative of the Administrator, the extension of official hospitality to the many VIP visitors, who included Her Majesty and the Duke of Edinburgh.

I was appointed a Justice of the Peace, an appointment I still hold.

In those days the Territory had only one Judge and two Magistrates, one each in Darwin and Alice Springs.

Magistrates visited Katherine and Tennant Creek one day a month to hear the most serious matters, but most of the day-to-day Lower Court work was handled by J.P.s sitting in pairs. This applied in Alice Springs and Darwin too,

when magistrates were away or overloaded. Our work included defended cases and sometimes committal hearings. Nowadays, with greatly increased population and greater numbers of professional judiciary, J.P.s are called on less and less often.

On my first day on the bench there was a *not guilty* plea defended by a solicitor who knew I had been a policeman and that the prosecuting sergeant (the late Gordon Raabe) was a former colleague of mine. I fully expected the solicitor to object to my sitting, particularly as there were other J.P.s available at the time. However, he raised no objection and neither did any other solicitor or defendant in the ensuing decades. Nor have I heard of anyone objecting to other former police sitting as justices.

It is said it's lonely at the top. It is lonely on the bench too. Deciding guilt or innocence and what penalty is appropriate if guilt is established are heavy responsibilities, not at all to be taken lightly. Nevertheless, there are some lighter moments.

In Katherine one day a European migrant appeared charged with assaulting another migrant who needed hospital treatment after a thorough tradesman-like talking to. The man pleaded guilty and the prosecutor recited the bare facts and I asked the defendant if he'd like to say anything. He just stood silently and shook his head.

In those days, an assault of such severity was likely to attract a penalty of three months imprisonment. However, this defendant looked a decent sort of bloke and we were certainly not disposed to inflict such a penalty without knowing a lot more about the circumstances of the offence.

I asked the man if he understood English well, where he lived and what he did for a living. It turned out he was a hard working labourer who lived alone in a hut in the bush out of town a bit.

Then I asked why he had given the man such a severe beating. To this he replied, "He kicka my cart." The prosecutor hadn't said anything about a cart, so to resolve our confusion I said, "Have you got a cart?" "Yes." "What sort of cart?" "A pussy cart."

After a few more questions we learned that the other man had gone to his hut, uninvited, drinks had been taken and a row ensued, culminating in the visitor kicking the defendant's cat - an imprudent gesture as it turned out.

We took the view that a fellow who kicked a lonely man's cat and probable only friend was asking to be dusted down; so we set the penalty at five pounds!

Ed Ferrier



The story of Tony Lynch's career as told by Terry Boxall, continued from last edition.

Out on the field the trooper's work began in earnest. He arrived there laden with official papers, for he was Stock Inspector, Health Officer, Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages, but as he said himself, "*It's a kind of job when a man's a doctor's clerk, a parson and a John*". Only he had an adjective in front of the word doctor.

Actually, The Granites did not commit breaches of the peace, though only recently I read how Lynch had rushed on patrol to Tanami, 63 miles distant, to arrest a man who was to be charged with forgery. One night, it is true, an Irish gentleman rushed out in his shirt with D.T.'s in his eye and raised his rifle to the stars, swearing to kill all the niggers from there to the Gulf. He was soon suppressed and sent to sleep by the community. But Lynch's job was far more serious than that. As white men seemed likely to make a fair sized settlement of The Granites in the boom days, it was very necessary to see that diseased blacks did not come near the camp, for the order that blacks should stay at least ten miles was honoured more in the breach than the observance. Lynch had to get his "boy" to round up all those men or women who were suffering from what is known as granuloma, a virulent venereal disease common among the desert blacks. Then he would have to bring the sufferers 400 miles into Alice Springs for treatment. Such cargo was not popular among the car drivers, who would not object to bringing a ton of mail, if necessary.

That was Lynch's worst job. He was also supposed to be an expert on mining law, probably a savings bank manager and a telegraph operator. Only there was no telegraph.

The many duties and the vast areas concerned I have mentioned indicate how self-reliant the trooper in the Territory has to be, in all weathers. And it is not surprising that the saddest moment in Tony Lynch's life was in Sydney, when, happy as the carefree cavalryman of the outback, dining at a cabaret with a pretty Sydney girl, he was told by the proprietor, on asking for a drink, "*Not on your life, I'd know you flat-foots anywhere*". "*And that*", says Tony, "*from a city coot who wouldn't know a shovel spear from a walking stick*".

Like many others, Trooper Lynch suffered on Tragedy Track. He was soon attacked by dysentery, but carried on as long as he could. Finally he returned to Alice Springs almost in a state of collapse. But he was soon back at the field, though today I hope for his sake, as only a handful of men remain there, a considerate Government has recalled him as it recalled Mining Warden Rodgers to his more comfortable office at Darwin.

Constable Lynch told me that he and Tom White, at Wave Hill, were probably the only bachelors left in the force.

It was found at The Granites by the expeditions which settled there for a long time that the meat and damper diet was the safest. The Powell men had their salt beef done by a veteran cook from Hall's Creek. He could make it into curry and stew and hash, and I heard no complaints. Custard powder made good puddings when served over currant damper or flour and raisin duff. The Chapman men lived on salt beef and rice puddings, with occasional pastry; but after three months on the field they preferred to give the pastry to the blacks - so Rufus Dawes rebelled and made no more. Trooper Lynch carried nothing but salt meat, flour, tea, sugar and curry powder with him on his patrols. He also insisted on taking lime juice with him for the purpose of killing the taste of bad water.

A letter from Trooper Tony Lynch which has just reached me tells, "*By the way*", Tony adds unconcernedly, "*I just got in myself with eight myall prisoners yesterday. I can assure you I'm damn glad to get back, as it was a pretty adventurous trip. I expect to be going out again on camels in a week or so; intend going around via Newlands Caves (in the Lasseter country), as there are a few murderers (blacks) out there and I may give them a flutter. Somehow I think they will give me a good run for my money as the waters are going to be few and far between for my camels. However, I will try to trick them at their own game in bushwork and see if I can't land them, providing the camels will stand the strain*".

This seems to indicate that Tony Lynch has been withdrawn from the shed at The Granites owing to lack of population and this his life has gone back to the old regime of the Mounties - catching murderers! So the aftermath of The Granites rush for him means just work - and more work.

Acknowledgement:

Thanks is due to Commander Robin Bullock for supplying the information about The Granites and other useful information too.

Note:

Further research indicates that there may have been more permanent structures used by police at Port Darwin in 1927. The evidence for this is: - In a paper headed, "Time-Line of N.T. Police History, 1864-1980", there appears this entry, "1926-27 Police Barracks under construction in Darwin". Also, in Darwin in May, 1923, A.V. Stretton and J.H. Kelly were photographed in front of a substantial building with a solid timber verandah. There is also evidence that at about that same time there was a cell block of stone being used.

Later, on a date unknown, Tony was promoted to Sergeant 2nd Class and posted to Anthony's Lagoon, about 300 miles north east of Tennant Creek. Here, he was the officer in charge, not only of the Anthony's Lagoon police district, but of the Borrooloola, Rankin River and Lake Nash districts as well. It is known he was here in 1938 and 1939 because in 1939 he was at Anthony's Lagoon when Gordon Birt of Borrooloola was forced to shoot and kill a white man who had gone berserk.



Birt used Tony's Chevrolet utility as the hearse for the burial, and obtained approval for Tony to be paid five pounds for its use. Tony had two camels he used to pull a buggy there too.

In April 1940, Tony was back for a second stint at Tennant Creek, as the Sergeant In Charge. Joe Mutch was there with him. There were 51 police in the force then.

In 1941, Tony was transferred to the Commonwealth Attorney General's Department and put in charge of 200 police in the Queensland Division of the Commonwealth Police.

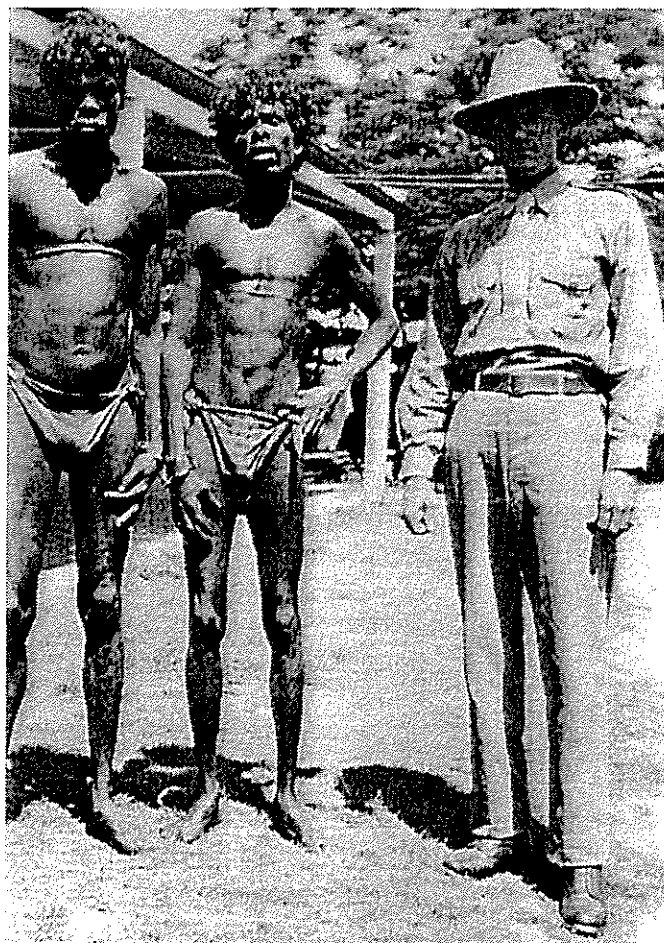
On 17 June, 1943, at Brisbane, Tony enlisted in the R.A.A.F., was given No. 124842 and was soon a member of the Special Investigation Branch of the Service Police Unit in Brisbane until 18 January, 1945. In March, 1945, he was sent on a course at the R.A.A.F. School of Administration and Special Duties, from which he graduated with a Commission, being promoted to Pilot Officer on 24 March, 1945. On 26 March, 1945, he was posted to the Russell Street, Melbourne, Headquarters of the Victorian Section of the R.A.A.F. Service Police Unit. On 20 September, 1945, he was posted as Deputy Assistant Provost Marshal to the Netherlands Section of the Service Police Unit, whose headquarters was at Morotai. On 24 September, 1945, he was promoted to Flying Officer and on 21 February, 1946, was made Assistant Provost Marshal.

On 1 April, 1946, he was posted back to Australia to Service Police Unit, Brisbane, to become the Assistant Provost Marshal, Brisbane. On 25 May, 1946, he was posted for discharge, which was completed on 29 August, 1946. When discharged, Tony's permanent address was given as "Balgownie", Mundubbera, Queensland. Shortly after discharge, Tony returned to Darwin on his own and was given a single man's hut at the rear of the Darwin Police Station, which was then in Bennett Street.

Just prior to 1946, in official Northern Territory records, Tony was listed as a First Class Sergeant of Police at Darwin. He stayed on in Darwin until he was retired on 27 July, 1947, on the grounds of invalidity. During those months when Tony was living behind the police station, he was not rostered for duty but informally transferred his legal knowledge of Northern Territory ordinances (which was considerable) and his practical police experience to the young constables recruited after World War II. He gave the writer all of his Ordinances and taught him much.

After farming for a while at Mundubbera and later living in Sydney for a period, Tony and his son, Peter, settled in Perth.

Tony spent his later years in an excellent retirement village at Lesmurdie, in the foothills overlooking Perth.



*Mounted Constable Tony Lynch with prisoners
(Central Australia)*

WANTED
ARTICLES OF INTEREST FOR
INCLUSION IN FUTURE ISSUES
OF THE CITATION.

Please forward to:
Garth Macpherson, c/- Community Relations,
P.O. Box 2630, Alice Springs, NT 0871

MERRY CHRISTMAS
AND
HAPPY NEW YEAR
FROM
THE EDITOR AND STAFF



Ed Ferrier

ANYONE FOR COFFEE

When I joined the NT Police Force in 1950 the penalty for supplying alcoholic liquor to Aborigines was six months imprisonment without the option. Without doubt the great majority were far better off, healthier and happier through being denied grog. (Goodness me - do I need

re-education in political correctness?)

However, there were people who chanced conviction and made ill-gotten gains through supplying liquor. Naturally the police devoted much effort to discouraging the practice.

One evening, Sgt Dave Mofflin and I resolved to try to catch a notorious supplier in the act of supplying from his house in what was then an outer area of Darwin. To do this we had crawled through several hundred yards of long grass arriving undetected within ten or fifteen yards of our quarry, close enough to observe any transaction that might take place.

Unfortunately, at the moment of our arrival we disturbed a large lady of Aboriginal persuasion who just happened to be catching forty winks in the grass. Perhaps the poor old soul thought that a couple of crocodiles were creeping up on her; anyway she lingered not and her great bulk was belied by the speed of her departure, to vocal accompaniment that could have been heard a mile away.

A minute or two later, out came the supplier, who had a great sense of humour - provided the joke was not on him. He yawned, stretched and then loudly soliloquised, "I suppose I might as well get rid of a few of these bottles." With that he bent and plucked up two of a large stack of empty 26-ounce bottles which he flung in our direction. These were followed by two more and soon Dave and I felt as if we were under grenade attack! We promptly stood up, whereupon the hail of bottles immediately stopped.

"Oh hello, boys," called the supplier amiably. "I didn't know you were there. Would you like to come in for a cup of coffee?"

He won that round.

Ed Ferrier



FLO MOFFLIN

1914 - 1997

We were saddened to learn of the death of Flo Mofflin on 5th September 1997 in Perth where she passed away after a short illness at the new nursing home she and Dave had recently

moved into. Flo and Dave's daughter Kerry Clark has supplied us with a brief history of Flo Mofflin:

Flo was born in Quairading, W.A. in 1914 and grew up in Perth where she met Dave. He later moved to Darwin with the Army and ultimately joined the Northern Territory Police Force. Flo travelled north as well and they married in December, 1941. Shortly after their marriage, Flo was evacuated from Darwin due to the Japanese air raids and returned to Perth. Undaunted by travel restriction and being unable to get permits to travel, Flo managed to get herself to Alice Springs where she and Dave were again united.

In December, 1942, Dave was transferred to Newcastle Waters and such was the policy in those days, that Flo was unable to accompany him. That didn't stop her so she packed a suitcase, hailed a passing truck and arrived in Newcastle Waters, red dust and all. Her reasoning was that she couldn't see the point in being married but separated - be in it together and that was the essence of their married life.

The next 30 years were spent in the Northern Territory in postings at Darwin, Alice Springs, Newcastle Waters and Rankin River to name a few. At times, the conditions were primitive and hard, particularly when Dave was away on his bush patrols. During these times, the only companions, apart from her children were the local aborigines. Several, like Long Tommy and Ruby became her friends and they in turn adored 'the missus', becoming faithful and loyal guardians. All experiences gained enriched her life and provided a life-style which she gave of herself whole heartedly, thoroughly enjoyed and wouldn't have wanted any other way.

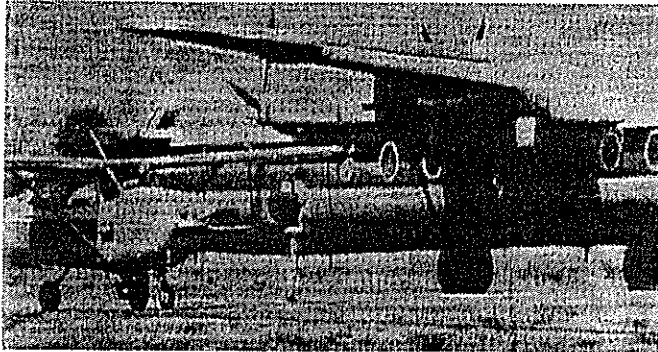
In 1970, Dave and Flo retired to suburban life near Perth, Western Australia, a completely different and tranquil surrounding to their earlier years as man and wife.

Flo Mofflin was a remarkable lady. Small in stature, strong in character, loyal, devoted to family and loved and respected by all who were fortunate enough to know her. Someone once asked Dave - "What is the smartest thing you have ever done?" Without hesitation he replied - "I married Flo."



ATTEMPTED HIJACK AT ALICE SPRINGS 1972

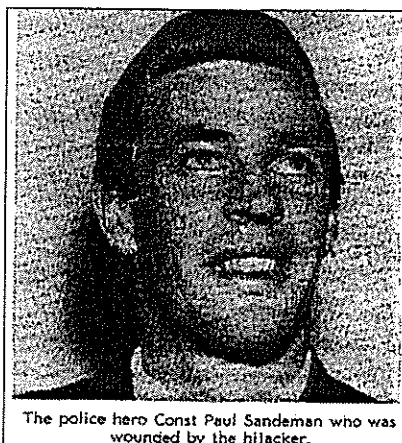
Saturday, 15 November marked the 25th anniversary of the first attempt at hijacking a domestic aircraft in Australia. The following extracts are provided with thanks to Mr. Bill McLaren, the Centralian Advocate dated Thursday, November 16, 1972, the N.T. Police Library, Mr. Perry Morey, Mr. Laurie Kennedy and Mrs. Jan Watts.



On Wednesday, 15th November, 1972, Ansett airlines of Australia Fokker Friendship, VH-FNI, Flight 232 from Adelaide was about half an hour out of Alice Springs. The plane was carrying 28 passengers and a crew of 4. As the plane was approaching the Alice Springs Airport at about 1.40p.m., a man emerged from the toilet carrying a firearm. He said to a hostess "This is a hijack" but she didn't take him seriously. He escorted both hostesses to the cockpit where he spoke to the pilot and demanded a parachute, jump suit and requested to be flown 1000 miles out into the desert.

Police were notified and attended. In the meantime, the plane landed and most of the passengers were allowed to leave. Six passengers elected to remain on the aircraft and the hijacker detained the four crew members.

The hijacker's demands were relayed to the tower and shortly afterwards, a light aircraft was dispatched to the airstrip on Bond Springs Station where the parachute and gliding clubs were located, approximately 10 miles (16 km) north of Alice Springs.



The police hero Const Paul Sandeman who was wounded by the hijacker.



THE four crew members of the hijacked airline were the centre of attention at a press conference late last night. From left: first officer, Walter Cowans, captain Ralph Young, hostess, Miss Gay Kentle and senior hostess, Miss Kay Goreham.

During this time, the hijacker demanded a light aircraft to convey him to the desert. A Cessna six seater piloted by Aero Club manager and chief flying instructor Ossie Watts taxied out. Ossie Watts was accompanied by Constable Paul Sandeman who was in plain clothes and posing as navigator. Meanwhile, all available police had rushed to the airport and concealed themselves at various points around the hangars. The hijacker then demanded the Cessna be brought closer to the Fokker Friendship within three minutes or he would shoot a passenger.

Ossie Watts brought the Cessna within 30 feet of the Friendship and stood with its motor running while the hijacker came down the stairs with his gun trained on a hostess, Miss Kay Goreham. The Friendship crew closed the hatch after he left to prevent him re-entering the aircraft. Once on the tarmac, he became very suspicious of Constable Sandeman and forced the hostess, Miss Goreham to search him for weapons. She stated she was unable to locate any.

Shortly afterwards, Constable Sandeman lunged at the hijacker, attempting to disarm him forcing the weapon upwards but his understandably sweaty palms slipped on the barrel of the firearm, which was thought to be a sawn-off .22 rifle. The hijacker discharged a shot which wounded Sandeman in the hand. A second shot entered the stomach of the Constable which caused him to loosen his grip on the hijacker. During the struggle, Constable Sandeman's pistol fell to the tarmac and this was kicked out of his reach. As the wounded Constable tried to get away, the hijacker continued to fire at his back, hitting him in the right shoulder and again in the upper left arm. The hijacker was then fired on by police. Ossie Watts also fired several shots from the cockpit of the Cessna. The hijacker then ran from the aircraft to some bushes at the edge of the tarmac and behind a small bank of earth while shooting continued.



He then appeared to hold his hand up in surrender.

As police approached him, he sat with his back towards them and fell back. Police then disarmed him of the rifle which turned out to be an ArmaLite .22 sawn off collapsible survival rifle as well as a sheath knife he was carrying on his belt. When the shooting was diverted away from him, Ossie Watts was able to leave his Cessna and attend to the wounded Constable Paul Sandeman.

Dr. John Hawkins of the Alice Springs Hospital attended. The hijacker had bullet wounds to the left lower leg, right shoulder and another under the chin into his head. The wound to his chin appeared to have been self inflicted. Both he and Constable Sandeman were conveyed to the Alice Springs Hospital where Constable Sandeman underwent immediate surgery. The hijacker died at 7:28 p.m. that evening.

Extensive inquiries were made throughout Australia in an effort to establish the hijackers identity.



After approximately 5 months, he was identified by associates from Melbourne as Miloslav Hrabinec, a Czech migrant.

The ultimate inquest established the wound to his chin which almost exited from the top of his head was fired from the hijackers firearm and had been self inflicted.

Constable Paul G. Sandeman was awarded the Queens Commendation for Bravery. It was presented to him at Alice Springs by His Honour the Administrator, Mr. F.C. Chaney on 22nd March, 1973. Unfortunately, Paul Sandeman who retired from the Northern Territory Police Force as a result of his injuries, was killed in a car crash in Queensland on 23rd. March, 1995.

Mr. Ossie Watts, who volunteered to pilot the Cessna has also passed away. He died in Alice Springs on 12th April, 1996.

Other Police Officers involved in the hijack incident were:-

Sgt.1/c Andy Mc Neill	retired Assistant Commissioner, Currently Mayor of Alice Springs.
Sgt.2/c Bob Jackson	Chief Inspector, Died 4.3.83
Sgt. Gary Burgdorf	Commander, Katherine Police.
Sgt. Geoff Preston	Resigned as 1/c Sergeant
Const. Alex Carolan	Resigned as 1/c Sergeant
Const. John (Fluffy) Williams	Retired as Sergeant.
Sgt. Sid Davis	Resigned.

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