



# the CITATION



Northern Territory Police Museum & Historical Society Inc

## Police Women In The Northern Territory

In 1961 women were introduced into the Northern Territory Police Force when five women attended a recruit training course with a number of male recruits. The course passed out on 10<sup>th</sup> April 1961. Growing pains were somewhat obvious at first. However, in June of that year, Joyce Richardson, a South Australian policewoman with 16 years experience was seconded to the Northern Territory for a period of 12 months as Officer in Charge of the new group with the task of establishing the Women Police

section of the Northern Territory Police Force. After Joyce returned to Adelaide, another South Australian, Pauline Russ was seconded as Officer in Charge for a further 12-month period.

The women worked in the Women Police Section and the Criminal Investigation Branch in plain clothes. In February 1978, the first uniform for women was introduced and this enabled the females to be initiated into the General Duties side of police work. Up until that time, their role was that of dealing with females and juveniles but they

can hold various positions throughout the force, in Forensic Section, Traffic, Information Bureau, Communications, Drug Investigation Unit, Juvenile Diversion Unit, Community Relations, Prosecutions, Criminal Investigation Branch and General Duties. Their duties in these sections are exactly the same as their male counterparts, an example being that in 1980, then Constable Kate Vanderlaan became Australia's first Policewoman motorcycle rider in Darwin Traffic

*Continued on page 2*



1961 - The Squad shows left to right:

Back row: Lou Hook, Bob Jackson, Jeffrey Hewitt, Norm Walsh, Lindsay Barnett, Dudley Mardling, Vern Chandler, Arnold Wilson, Maurice Sullivan, Bill Jacobs, Jack Ilett, Barry Spinks and Darryl Alexander.

Front row: Norma Bailey, Shirley Booth, Margaret Craven, Fay Bartlett and Joanne Wendler.



*Continued from page 1*

Section. Kate is currently Superintendent Crime, Southern Region and based in Alice Springs. Another example was in 1992, Constable 1/c Cheryl Bell became the first woman to be permanently appointed to a bush station at Yuendumu, which is a three-member station situated 300 kilometres north-west of Alice Springs in the Tanami Desert. There are now female members in every major centre in the Northern Territory and frequently serve on more remote stations.

In 1975, Glenys Simpson was the first Policewoman to be promoted to Sergeant in the Northern Territory. She retired in 1997 with the rank of Sergeant.

A female may now remain in the service upon marriage and maternity leave benefits are available.

The role of policewomen is an ever-widening one. There are few occupations in which women are required to be as versatile.



It is with regret that we advise "The Citation" will no longer be produced in Alice Springs.

Please forward all Correspondence to:

**MR BILL WILSON  
C/- RETIRED POLICE  
ASSOCIATION (NT)  
PO BOX 37656  
WINNELLIE NT 0821**

We apologise for any inconvenience

# The Search for Readford

By R E Killmier, A.M., Q.P.M., J.P.  
Deputy Commissioner (SA Police).

OCTOBER 1883. Harry Readford<sup>1</sup> is reported missing from Brunette Downs Station in to Northern Territory. A search party is mounted under the direction of Mounted Constable John Charles Shirley. The party is comprised of either men and 18 horses. These men were Shirley, James Hussey, John Reese, George Phillips, Arthur Phillips and Alan M. Giles with two native trackers. Tragedy overtook the search party, all perishing from lack of water with the exception of two members, (A M Giles), an experienced bushman, and an aboriginal tracker. Ironically Readford was later found, but was to suffer a different fate, drowning in Corrella Creek during heavy rains, a few years later. The following is account by Giles of the events. This appeared in "Family Life in South Australia," published privately by J. Watts, in 1890.

"On the Monday after MC Shirley received his final instructions from the Commissioner<sup>2</sup> of Police, MC Shirley, J Rees, self and a black tracker started with four saddle horses and two packs, one horse being packed with water, and intending to find water to east of the camp on Attack Creek and find a route to Corrella. Our pack horse with water bags was a very old one, supplied by Powell's Creek and quite unfit for the work, as I mentioned at the time of starting.

We proceeded east for some 25 miles with no signs of water, then struck north to a visible plain and camped in scrub at about five miles, no water. Next morning we proceeded across the plain and over some low ranges to another small plain, where water was found by John Rees in a native well and some crab holes. Camped there that day - distance 6 miles.

Wednesday - The old horse died and I went back to the camp on Attack Creek to bring up the remainder of the party, as there was splendid feed aswell.

Thursday - Brought up the remainder of the party to Rees Well. Friday - Rees and Hussey went out and found more crab holes with water, two miles to the east; also struck Readford's tracks about six miles from camp, bearing north east. Saturday - Shifted party to crabs holes. Sunday - whole party made start for Corrella, following Readford's tracks with slight difficulty, the course being northeast on a large plain. Camped at 7pm having travelled about 35 miles without finding water.

Monday - Started on tracks bearing east by south and east at times. We lost tracks about 10am. Kept on the same course but did not strike the tracks again. Very hot.

About 3pm came on large bluebush with Coolibah running about northeast and southwest. Followed it to the north for three or four miles. Saw several water birds and searched for water without success. Camped at 5pm having made about 25 miles.

Here MC Shirley said he had decided to return, so we planted all swags, rations etc in trees with the exception of about 30lbs of flour, and a little sugar. At 6.30pm we started on a north westerly course to cut tracks on the plain. Left all packs except one; also all rations and rifles, but took the remaining water (one gallon) in a canteen. Travelled on at a very slow pace dropping horses every mile. About 2pm there were only three horses left, so Arthur Phillips, James Hussey and John Rees stayed behind to have a sleep and come on,

*Continued on page 3*



*Continued from page 2*

on foot. Shirley gave them nearly all the water.

Wednesday morning - About 6:30am we struck tracks about 14 miles for Rees Well. All the horses were done, so we left them. Shirley, George Phillips and two boys proceeded on foot. I sent the boy with me to bring back water from the crab holes and Shirley sent the other. We proceeded along the tracks for about a mile. I was in the lead when it became very hot. I struck a little patch of scrub and camped for the day. The others did not come up to me.

Wednesday evening - I came to my senses about dark, and started on the tracks. I made about 3 miles and was having a rest when I heard a voice calling about 200 yards from me. Going over I found poor Shirley under a little bush. He said he came there to die, as he could not walk. I asked him if he knew anything of the others. He said only George, who was under a bush about 300 yards away and whom he thought was dead. I did not go as Shirley could not go with me, and I was afraid I could not find him.

While we were talking we heard a cooee, and I answered it. Hussey came up, saying he had been camped close all day, but unable to come, and that he thought Rees and Arthur were behind somewhere and he believed them to be dead. Hussey and I decided to push on at once and tried to persuade Shirley to come with us. The poor fellow tried to walk and fell, so we were compelled to shake hands and leave him. Hussey and I walked on very slowly.

Thursday morning - We reckoned we had 11 miles to go. We travelled on until sunrise and could see scrub ahead of us about two miles distant. When Hussey lay down, I begged him to get up and not remain on the plain to die in the sun. He only went about 200 yards further when he lay down again. No persuasion would induce him to move. I was compelled to leave him under a little

bush.

I made the scrub about 8am, and was then 6 miles from the well. I managed to stagger on about 2 miles when I fell down and recollect no more until I was aroused by my boy pouring water over my head. He managed to get me along to within about 2 miles of camp when he left me in the shade and went for more water. I got into the camp about 5pm on Thursday. I had a good drink, wash and sleep and with the boy started after Hussey. Friday morning - We went about 4 miles back when I knocked up, and the boy also. Cooeed for about half an hour, but on receiving no reply we returned to the camp, starting here about 9, being very thankful for my escape.

I think the reason for my standing longer than the others is that I would not drink horse blood, which the others did whenever a horse knocked up. Can you kindly procure me warrants to bury the bodies, as I can do so from here and also recover some of the things, as rain had fallen yesterday and today. I could not easy with the thought that the bodies of the poor fellows I have found such good mates are being torn about by dogs and birds of prey.

**To the Superintendent of  
Telegraphs, Adelaide via Skinner,  
Alice Springs**

Sorry to report that all the police party except myself and a black boy died from thirst on Wednesday last. Also all the horses. Have walked 50 miles with nothing to eat since Sunday. Please instruct Mr Abbott to send a man with two spare riding horses, also a pocket instrument, foolscap, pencil, pick, shovel, tomohawk, and rope to lower bodies into graves. Let him send me a little nourishing food, such as rice, cornflour, fruit and limejuice and also a box of pills, blanket, towel, short, trousers, tobacco and matches. Also two billies, plates, knife, fork and fly, and some cartridges. I have none. Please let the party start at once, as I

am very weak, tired and wet through. I know where the bodies<sup>3</sup> of Shirley and Hussey are lying - about 15 miles from the last water. Arthur Phillips and Rees further back. Please let the party get here tonight. - AM Giles, survivor, Police party, Attack Creek.

**To the Superintendent of  
Telegraphs, Adelaide 9pm**

Line just workable, but there is a very heavy leakage, and it may go again at any moment. There is very bad news of the police party who started in search of Readford. I have not yet had full particulars, but believe the whole party with the exception of Giles and the blackboy have perished for want of water. Mr Giles left the Trooper Shirley about 15 miles from Attack Creek apparently completely exhausted, but as there is a thunderstorm about the vicinity there are some hopes of him surviving, but the rest of the thunderstorm about the vicinity there are some hopes of his surviving, but the rest of the men, viz, J Rees, J Hussey, G Phillips and A Phillips were left without hope of recovery. Mr Giles and the black boy walked in 50 miles to Attack Creek. A party from Powell's Creek left this morning to assist Mr Giles with instructions from Mr Johnston to travel day and night. The above information I received from Mr Bowley at Tennant's Creek.

Immediately communication is restored I will speak to Mr Johnstone at Tennant's Creek and get any other particulars they have and wire same to you. - J Skinner, Alice Springs.

**To AM Giles, Attack Creek**

Fearfully shocked to hear of sad disaster, but I thanked God to hear of your safety. Relief has been sent to you. Run no further risk. Hope you will reach Tennant's Creek safely. Let me know how you and the poor black boy are. Please give me the names and addresses of the nearest relations of the other poor fellows, if you know them.

C Todd, Postmaster General and Superintendent of Telegraphs.

*Continued on page 4*



*Continued from page 3*

Mounted Constable John Charles Shirley

Joined SA Police on 10 March 1877.  
– Born Clonmel Ireland, on 27 September 1856.

Service Record

10/3/1877: 3<sup>rd</sup> Class Trooper  
Adelaide.

1/6/1879: 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Trooper –  
Believed to have been stationed at  
Alice Springs Telegraph Station in  
1880 and the first stationed there.

1/7/1882: Promoted to First Class  
Mounted Constable.

23/7/1882: Transferred to Barrow  
Creek.

7/11/1883: Died of thirst, (at age 27 years). He was the first police officer to lose his life in the Northern Territory. He is memorialised at the <sup>1</sup>Fort Largs Police Academy.

*Some accounts state this search was mounted to find aborigines who speared Joseph Martin, causing his death on 29 August 1883. This is obviously incorrect, the unrelated search for Readford commencing on or about 29<sup>th</sup> October 1883. Shirley's death is stated to have occurred on 7<sup>th</sup> November 1883. Readford or Readford as he was sometimes known, is better known to history as "Captain Starlight" the perpetrator of the theft of more than 1000 head of cattle from Bowen Downs in Queensland's Central West in 1870, and for his epic trek with these into South Australia.*

<sup>2</sup>William John Peterswald –  
Commissioner of Police, 1882 – 1896.

<sup>3</sup>The burial site of Shirley is unknown today, but is believed to be in the vicinity of Brunchilly Creek, about 40-mile east-north-east of Attack Creek. Some accounts credit Mounted Constable Willshire of Alice Springs with burying Shirley. As Willshire was stationed at Alice Springs some 300 miles away and requiring about 10 days travel, it is more likely Giles and others returned and performed the burials. It is unlikely Willshire could have found the bodies without Giles especially after such a considerable lapse of time. SAPOL members contributed to a fund, which raised £347.19s.3s. This was considerable amount for the time and was paid to Shirley's mother.

Courtesy SA Police Historical Journal  
"Hue & Cry".

# HOMICIDE AT BORROLOOLA

*By Gordon Birt – from an article in the Territorian, April, 1968*

*Part ii continuing on from last  
Citation*

In the Gulf of Carpentaria there was only one tide in twenty-four hours, and this caused a rise and fall of no more than seven feet as far as its influence extended up the McArthur. When patrolling to the eastern side of the river we rode our horses over at a place called Burketown Crossing, about a mile upstream. Here the river narrowed and we crossed on some flat rocks.

The tide raced through and it could only be traversed at low tide, no more than knee-deep for a horse.

This was the main route to the town of Burketown in Queensland. At best it was only a buggy track and negotiated by few motor vehicles, other than those with four-wheel drive.

After about two months I had a visit from my friend, Sergeant Tony Lynch from Anthony's Lagoon. He brought a Chrysler utility which I was taking on trial with a view to buying. He asked me the whereabouts of Johnson and whether I had any trouble with him.

"No, Tony, I get on well with him. I can't understand how he caused the police any trouble here. At present he is away down the river on a canoe trip or else I would introduce you. He left his cat with me to look after."

Tony returned to his station on the monthly mail truck. At first I only used his utility for short trips down the river to the Five Mile and other fishing spots. One day it broke down about a mile from the station. I sent a tracker to get Johnson and he came immediately, and soon located the fault. Refusing any payment he said, "You did me a good turn once and I am always pleased to help you anytime."

Camped near the river was a young man called Bill. I have forgotten his surname. A companion called Brennan had been with him, but left overland for Roper River with a party of Aborigines before my arrival. Bill was an occasional visitor at the police station, and sometimes stopped to have tea at my invitation. One the last occasion he announced he would be leaving for Queensland on the next mail

truck.

The day the truck left it stopped, as usual, at the station to pick up the mail. Bill spoke to me confidently, "You want to watch that Johnson. He has no time for coppers."

"I get on alright with Jack," I replied. "I knew him before I came here."

"He reckons he is the champion cop beater-up," Bill continued. "Did one over in Queensland so he says."

"Perhaps he did," I retorted. "I wouldn't condemn him for that without knowing the circumstances."

Bill went on, "He is a stand-over man. I am glad to be getting out or else he and I would have a showdown."

The truck then left. Its final stop before quitting Borroloola was always the hotel.

A few hours later Johnson called at the station and inquired if I had lost a revolver.

"Not that I know of. Wait until I check the firearms," I replied.

*Continued on page 5*



*Continued from page 4*

After checking, I said, "Yes, there is an old 45 missing. It is obsolete but still on the property list."

Johnson then said, "I have been told that before the mail left the pub today Bill was flashing a revolver in the bar. He said that he pinched it from the copper."

"Thanks Jack. I will get a message away on the wireless straight away."

I sent a radio message to Constable Hughie Deviney at Rankine River requesting that he question and search Bill when the mail arrived there. A few days later Deviney radioed that Bill had been arrested and tried.

He was sentenced to three months' hard labour in Fannie Bay Gaol. The revolver would be returned on the next mail.

I told Johnson the news and thanked him for his timely information.

"That's alright," he replied. "When I heard what Bill had done I discussed it with some others and we decided that you were too good a copper to have a mongrel like that put it over you."

Johnson had a mistress, a stoutish, happy-looking Aboriginal woman of about thirty years of age. Her name was Florida and she belonged to the Mara Tribe from the Roper River district. She had been trained for sewing and domestic work at the Roper River Mission.

Many men in the district lived openly or covertly with Aboriginal women.

The Aboriginals Ordinance provided heavy penalties for white men convicted of keeping Aboriginal women as mistresses, or even having sexual intercourse with them. But this law had rarely been enforced at Borroloola and other areas remote from Darwin.

A few weeks after the revolver incident Tracker Donegan said to me, "That Florida, sweetheart longa Jack Johnson, you that she is a widow woman. Her man been die long time ago."

"Yes," I replied. "I have heard that."

Donegan continued, "That man been have a brother, Dick. Blackfellow law say that Florida now belong to Dick. And I hear that he is coming to get her soon."

That information caused me considerable thought. Johnson was living with the girl illegally and any tribal husband claiming

her must have my support. How would Johnson react to that? I was soon to find out.

The month of September 1939 rolled on. On the 3<sup>rd</sup>, the German armies invaded Poland. Britain declared war on the Nazis, and Australia and other countries followed suit. World War II had commenced in earnest. O'Shea and Johnson continued their nightly visits to the station and listened to the radio news. Frequently I typed a bulletin of the latest news and sent a native "footwalker" across country for 60 miles to Horace Foster at Manangaroo. On my last patrol there he had requested this service.

September passed and the month of October commenced. The "Dry" season ways ending and the initial signs of the "Wet" with its North-West monsoons appeared. Occasional thunderstorms frequently yielded much thunder and lightning with little or no rain. The country was still dry and vehicles passing raised clouds of "bull dust". The climate was hot and sticky and many experienced the discomfort of "prickly heat", a kind of rash. Tempers were frayed and all longed for the rains to commence in earnest, and the dry grass to be replaced by the green.

Sickness broke out and my two permanent trackers, the two Charlies, were afflicted with a kind of influenza. They were put to bed and I treated them with what I could find in the medicine chest.

Donegan, who was "sitting down" in the bush camp, was hastily summoned and put on the pay-roll. I also had a white patient, the cook from Robinson River Station, "Red" Tom Connolly who appeared to be suffering partly from the after effects of a drinking spree, and partly from the "flu". He had been staying at the pub going through his pay cheque.

When this was exhausted he was exhausted ferried across to the other side of the river in a canoe to pick up his "plant" of three or four horses to return to his job at Robinson River. After a day or two Aborigines reported that he had not left, but was lying in his swag in the shade not far from the river. I went across and had a look at him, and then persuaded him to return with me, where he was given a bed in the spare room.

I doctored him with influenza mixture an occasional nips of whiskey for his "hangover". My rest at nights was often disturbed by his raving and shouting.

The day after I took the redheaded cook in, Tim O'Shea arrived from Katherine in his utility truck, and stayed with his brother as usual. He brought a passenger, Aboriginal Dick, whose intention was to claim his new tribal wife, Johnson mistress, Florida.

Next day, Dick and Florida called to see me. Dick explained that they both intended to return with Tim O'Shea to Katherine on the following day.

Trouble was expected from Johnson as he had made threats. Dick was a tall Aboriginal of about 30 years of age and spoke good English. Florida said she was eager to go with him, and added that she would have left Johnson before, only that she was frightened of him.

I assured them that they had nothing to fear from Johnson, and said I would call and see him to find out his attitude.

That night I visited Johnson and said "Jack I hear that Florida has left you and is leaving for Katherine tomorrow with her new husband".

Johnson retorted "I don't care where she goes. If she like to run off with a black fellow, that's her doing. She is damned ungrateful as I have done a lot for her. I will have nothing to do with any of them."

Tim O'Shea left next day for Katherine, with his two passengers. Not a word was heard from Johnson.

*Continued on page 6*

**Do You Have  
A Story?**

If So, Please Send To:

**MR BILL WILSON  
C/- RPANT  
PO BOX 37656  
WINNELLIE  
NT 0821**



*Continued from page 5*

A couple of days later I was driving passed the hotel and Johnson store heading towards the Police Station. When near the store I was startled by two loud reports of a firearm being discharged nearby. I stopped the utility and saw Johnson outside his premises with a long barrelled .45 revolver in his right hand,

"What is all the shooting about Jack?" I asked.

"I was only trying to scare the pub goats away Gordon. Johnnie lets them wander and they keep coming on my property."

I said, "When I see Johnnie again I will mention it. Don't fire anymore shots about here. It is dangerous."

That night an agitated Johnnie O'Shea called on me.

"You will have to do something about Johnson," he quavered. "He has been threatening to shoot me and using dreadful language."

I told O'Shea about the shots fired that afternoon, and Johnson's complaint about the hotel goats.

"Goats be damned," exclaimed Johnnie. "They were nowhere near his place. The goat shepherd, Jemina, had them down along Rocky Creek. Johnson meant to scare you when he fired those shots. It is more than a coincidence he fired just as you were driving past."

"Anyway, he didn't scare me," I assured O'Shea. "When I was at Tennant Creek I came up against gunmen, or would-be gunmen, on more than one occasion, and I'm still alive to tell the tale. I will have a talk with Johnson and let you know later."

"Take your gun with you," the hotelkeeper advised.

"I think I can handle this without resorting to firearms," I replied.

"Don't say I didn't warn you," retorted O'Shea.

It was with mixed feelings that I walked down to Johnson's store later on. Maybe Johnson was exaggerating as he and Johnson always appeared to be on friendly terms. I was reluctant to take any drastic action against the latter on account of his assistance to me in the stolen revolver case, and for other reasons. Perhaps I could smooth out any trouble when I talked to Johnson. I

certainly hesitated to antagonise him by carrying a revolver.

Johnson was lying, fully dressed, on his bed in a room at the rear of the store when I entered at his invitation, after knocking at the door. I told him the substance of O'Shea's complaint, and asked the cause of the trouble between them.

"O'Shea is a liar," Johnson exclaimed. "I only threatened to shoot his goats if they trespassed on my property again."

I pointed out that he could not take the law into his own hands in that fashion.

Johnson then burst out, "It is Johnnie's brother, Tim, who started the trouble. He put that boy up to take Florida away. She was a good worker, and he only wanted her as cheap labour in his pubs."

"Nonsense," I retorted. "I knew some time ago that Dick was coming to claim her. Under tribal law she belongs to him as her former husband was his brother. It just happened that he got a lift out of here with Tim O'Shea."

"Nothing can make me believe that Tim O'Shea wasn't behind it all," was Johnson's rejoinder.

"Even if he was, I don't see why you are taking it out on Johnnie, who had nothing to do with it," I said.

"They are all tarred with the same brush," Johnson replied.

"Look Jack," I advised. "We are only a small white community here amongst a larger Aboriginal population. There is no reason why we all shouldn't enjoy a peaceful life without any trouble. You are upset about Florida, and I am sure you will get over it in time. My advice to you is to go away for a while, a canoe trip down the coast perhaps. Then when you have calmed down you will see things in their right perspective."

"That sounds a good idea," said Johnson. "I may take your advice."

After leaving Johnson I ran into John O'Shea outside. I told him that I had spoken to Johnson and that he seemed alright now. I advised the hotelkeeper to go to bed and not to worry.

"I am not sure that he is alright. Can you lend me a gun to defend myself with?" O'Shea asked.

Just then Johnson rushed out of his store

shouting, "You bastard O'Shea, dobbing me in with the police again. I will get you and your precious brother if it's the last thing I do."

He aimed a blow at O'Shea but I grabbed his arm and it failed to connect. In the same instant Johnnie lashed out with a large electric torch, striking Johnson on the face.

"Let me go Gordon," Johnson yelled. "You hold me while he hits me."

Breaking away from me, Jack rushed in to his premises and returned brandishing a large revolver.

"I will get you both for this," he shouted. "I'll burn the damned pub down first."

Speaking quietly, I said, "Put that gun down Jack."

Johnson pointed the weapon at me and yelled, "Stand back Gordon. I'll shoot you if you try to stop me."

I stood back, and he rushed around the back of the hotel. I ran towards the police station. Looking back I saw the reflection of flames behind the hotel.

Before reaching the station I met Tracker Donegan coming towards me. I told him what had happened as we both raced into the office. I quickly loaded a .45 service revolver and a .303 rifle and returned to the hotel with the tracker.

Both the hotel and Johnson's premises were in darkness. I called out and John O'Shea emerged from the rear of the hotel.

"I don't know where Johnson has gone," he said.

"I saw flames behind the pub as I was running back to the station," I said.

"Yes Johnson set fire to some papers in the storeroom. After he left I ran in and put it out with a few buckets of water. Have a look."

I looked inside a door while O'Shea illuminated the interior of the storeroom with his torch. I saw some blackened papers and several planks of the board floor were charred.

"Lucky you got to it in time or the whole place would have gone," I observed.

Next morning I drove the utility to Johnson's store. Prior to leaving the station I buckled on my gun belt with a loaded .45 Webley revolver in the holster.

*Continued on page 7*





*Continued from page 6*

Before I could enter his premises Johnson came out of the door carrying a .22 rifle and a shotgun which he handed to me saying, "I suppose you are taking away my firearms."

I put the weapons in my car and said, "Where is your revolver and .303 rifle?"

"I loaned the .303 to George Butcher. I can't find the revolver, and think I must have dropped it somewhere last night. Did you see what I did with it?"

He muttered, "Come inside and have a look. You won't find it here."

A quick search in the store and living quarters by me failed to locate the missing weapon. Sure, I thought, he must think I am naïve to believe his story about losing it. It must be concealed somewhere. And I only had his word about loaning the

.303 rifle to the manager of McArthur River Station.

As I was leaving Johnson called out, "You have taken away my guns but I have something else that will fix you."

I said, "What do you mean?"

"You will find out," was the reply.

That afternoon I drove across Rocky Creek to see the local Justice of the Peace, Charlie Havey, at his store. After Charlie had hunted a crowing rooster from the end of the table we commenced our talk. Owing to the prevalence of hawks, Charlie reared his chickens inside the kitchen and after the birds attained full size, they still kept coming indoors.

I gave Mr Havey a summary of what had happened in regard to Johnson. I also told him that I had despatched a radio message to Darwin Headquarters requesting assistance to make an arrest as the offender was a dangerous character. I then swore an information before the JP charging Johnson with arson, and Mr Havey signed a warrant for his arrest.

"When are you going to pick him up?" the storekeeper asked.

"Tonight. He made some mere threats today and hinted that he had a secret weapon. I can't wait until Darwin sends assistance, if they ever do."

"Every footstep I hear I think it is him gunning for me, and it will have to be resolved one way or another."

"Don't try to take him without your gun," the JP advised. "I am sure he has hidden his revolver somewhere. He often has it shoved in the back of his belt, so don't assume he hasn't got it if you can't see it."

"Yes, Charlie, I will be armed. Do you think he would shoot?"

"You never can tell. He has threatened several people here at different times. I heard that he shot someone in Queensland, but got out of it on the plea of self defence."

I said, "When I arrest him I will call him outside and cover him with my revolver. If he submits quietly it will be alright. But if he tries to get back inside I am afraid that I will have to let him have it."

"Yes," said Charlie. "Outside in the open, with him under cover, you would be a sitting shot. Especially as it is moonlight tonight."

That evening I walked to Johnson's store carrying a loaded .45 service revolver. Tracker Donegan was with me with a loaded .303 rifle in his arms. The tracker was only a gun bearer in case Johnson ran inside and was firing back at me. My plan then was to retreat out of range and return his fire with the rifle. Why I did this operation at night was on account of the lack of cover between Johnson's store and the police station. During daylight he could watch every move I made.

Stopping outside Johnson's door I called out, "Are you there Jack?"

A voice answered, "Yes."

"Come outside a minute, I want to see you," I requested.

The place was in darkness but Johnson emerged almost immediately. I pointed my revolver at him saying loudly, "Jack Johnson I arrest you on a charge of arson. Will you come quietly please?" I spoke unhurriedly but my heart was thumping. What would he do? Was he carrying a weapon, or was it hidden inside?

Johnson looked startled. He stepped forward and I jumped back as I thought he was going to grab my gun. Then he suddenly jumped back towards his doorway shouting, "No, I am not going. No bloody copper will ever take me."

In a split second he would have been inside. A deafening report followed as I fired at the fleeing figure. I could see nothing at first but heard some heavy breathing. John O'Shea appeared at my side and I asked him to bring a light as I thought I had shot Jack Johnson. The publican shone his torch in Johnson's doorway, and I saw the tall figure lying just inside.

O'Shea and Tracker Donegan helped me carry the inert form and lay him on a bed. Johnson was breathing quickly and said, "I am done Gordon, I am done." After a minute or two he stopped breathing and I could tell he was dead. I examined the body and found a gaping wound in the stomach. Paradoxically it did not bleed much.

I covered the body with a blanket and then borrowed O'Shea's torch while I made a search for Johnson's revolver or any other weapons. The search was unsuccessful, as no firearms were found.

"I am sure he must have planted his gun somewhere," I said to Johnnie.

"Why was he so anxious to get inside?"

I locked up Johnson's premises and returned to the police station. I then got the car out and drove down to see Charlie Havey and reported the killing to him in his capacity as Justice of the Peace.

"Don't worry Gordon," the JP advised. "That chap had it coming to him. It was either you or him, and I am glad that it was him."

Next morning I radioed Darwin Headquarters that I had shot and killed Johnson when he resisted arrest on a charge of arson. The operator at Cloncurry base said, "Hang on a minute, I have one for you."

The message was in reply to my urgent message requesting assistance to make the arrest. It simply said that Sergeant Littlejohn was leaving Darwin by tomorrow's train and would proceed to Borrooloola to investigate. Littlejohn, I knew, was on his way to Anthony's Lagoon to take over that station from Sergeant Lynch, who presumably was waiting there for his relief to arrive. Why Lynch could not have been sent to help me is beyond my understanding.

After I had finished with my radio work,

*Continued on page 8*



*Continued from page 7*

Tracker Donegan took me across the other side of the river in a canoe. I, there, called at the home of a man called Fred Blittner and he agreed to dig a grave for the burial of the deceased. I asked him if he would care to prepare the body for burial, sewing it up in a blanket, but he emphatically declined.

Blittner was a little tawny fellow of middle age with a drooping "Henry Lawson" type moustache. On account of having once skippered a lighter on the McArthur River, his nickname was "The Fresh Water Admiral." Every year he took a contract to dredge the river channel at Blackfellows Crossing after the "Wet". He used Aboriginal labour for this work with Pilot Harry as foreman. One of the old pilot's daughters was Blittner's "housekeeper", so it was all in the family. I assured Blittner that the Administration would pay him the contract price for the gravedigging.

Later I went to Johnson's store with some hessian and twine to sew the body up for burial. The body was lying still under its blanket covering.

I was distressed to see the tabby tom cat belonging to the deceased sitting on the bed with the body. That was enough to cause me to rush in to the pub for a couple of quick brandies before I commenced my macabre task. I put the cat on the floor and it rubbed around my legs while I sewed up the body of its dead master. The cat knew me, as I looked after it once while, Johnson was away on a canoe trip.

When I had finished my sewing job I picked up the cat and carried it back to the police station. Tracker Publican Charlie's wife, Elsie, met me at the kitchen door, She said, "What's the matter Djulama, you sorry belonga Jack Johnson?" (The local Aborigines had given me the name of "Djulama").

"Yes, I am sorry belonga Jack, but now I am more sorry belonga this pussy cat. We will have to give him a home here," I replied.

In the afternoon I loaded Johnson's body in the back of my utility truck. Tracker Young Charlie, now recovered from his illness, and Fred Blittner's Aboriginal assistant, Francis, helped me. Steady rain had commenced to fall as we drove off. Francis guided me to where "the Fresh Water Admiral" was waiting by a newly-

dug grave, about half a mile from the hotel, and towards Burketown Crossing.

Standing in the light, but continuous rain, I read a burial service before we lowered the body into the grave.

When we had finished filling it in all were wet and cold. I produced a bottle of rum and Blittner and I enjoyed a couple of nips. I also gave the two Aborigines a nip each as a reward for their valuable assistance, which they appreciated.

Two days later, just after breakfast, I heard the noise of a plane. A bi-plane with "NT Medical Service" inscribed on it landed on the landing strip near the police station. The pilot was the well known "Flying Doctor", Clyde Fenton, from Katherine. His passenger was Mr CK Ward, a Darwin Magistrate, whose

intention was to conduct an inquest on the death of Johnson. I had previously been advised by radio from Darwin that the two above mentioned would be arriving.

*Stay Tuned for Part iii of 'Homocide at Borroloola' in the next edition of Citations.*

*The Producers of  
"The Citation"  
would like to wish  
all our Readers a  
Merry Christmas  
and a Happy New  
Year.*



## *"The Scourge of the North"*

*Written by Mounted Constable Victor  
Hall as a tribute to his mate Tom Turner.*

The stalwart trooper snuffles the breeze  
As he sits his restless horse,  
While the dawn wind rustles the drooping trees  
And his eyes shine t'wards the north.

Full many a league of stony kloof  
And miles of echoing gorge  
Shall ring to his iron-shod horse's hoof  
Ere he brings in Bullita George.

By many a wilderness flat and creek  
His unmapped trail shall wind,  
But a finger dipped in beer last week  
Has traced what we may not find.

His inscrutable look sets stern and wild  
On a face that is hard as steel,  
As the wilderness yields to her favourite child  
Her secrets as miles unreel.

What boots it the willy bush-wise black  
To double and dodge and turn,  
For Tom of the mounted has taken his trail.  
One went - but two shall return.

And so it shall be with the Men of the North,  
No Epic their tale shall lack,  
The dawn wind knows of their going forth.  
But what of their coming back?