



the **CITATION**

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY POLICE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

EULOGY - WILLIAM JAMES MCLAREN

13 October 1916 to 9 May 2000

delivered by

Commissioner Northern Territory Police

Brian Bates, AM APM

In the words of Simone de Beauvoir "One's life has value so long as one attributes value to the life of others, by means of love, friendship, indignation and compassion".

We come together here today to celebrate a wonderful life and in recognition of the fact, that one of the tallest trees in the Northern Territory forest has fallen.

As with any significant loss we that remain are left with mixed emotions. Sadness and grief are of course at the forefront of these emotions but equally we have a sense of wonderment as to the magnitude, now more evident by his absence from this world, of the life and times of William James McLaren - Bill McLaren.

A life of such magnitude is not easily seen or appreciated from a single perspective. John's words have already conveyed a powerful impression of Bill's journey from youth and hardship on an isolated Gippsland farm to maturity and fulfilment, in every sense, in this Northern Territory, a place that he loved.

I guess I should start by stating the obvious. Bill McLaren is not a hard man to eulogise. There is no possibility that my words, or our thoughts, today will idealise him in death beyond what he was in life. His was a life not characterised by ego or flourish but was instead underlined by the qualities that were so evident to those that knew and worked with him.

The tributes of the past week, many of them published in the newspaper all have a common thread and describe his gentleness, his decency, and his compassion.

These tributes also reminded me that whilst Bill's role as the Commissioner of the Northern Territory Police ranks high amongst his achievements he had many others both before and after that time.

We shouldn't forget that before becoming Commissioner in the Northern Territory, Bill had completed a 29 year career with the Victoria Police. He served with distinction in a variety of roles. John has already mentioned his role heading up the Stolen Motor Vehicle Squad - and I recall when as a Sergeant in the CIB where I'm pleased to say he had a positive effect on a skinny young Constable. Well it must have been so because that young Constable, Brian Bates also went on to become Police Commissioner in Northern Territory. Bill also served in General Duties as a uniformed Constable and a Sergeant and in 1956 was the Sergeant in Charge of the Olympic Village in Melbourne. John has also talked of Bill's attendance at the Police College at Bramshill in the UK and his service on attachment to several British Police Forces. When he left the Victoria Police Bill was an Inspector and had been the Director of the Airlie Police College. I think it would be fair to say that many people would have been proud to list the achievements of these 29 years as life's work - but Bill was just getting started.

Bill was appointed as the Commissioner of the Northern Territory Police Force in 1967. Think back to the Territory at that time and consider the arrival of the McLaren family through the eyes of a 12 year old John McLaren.

John tells us how the family hitched a caravan to the family station wagon and drove up the narrow black ribbon of bitumen that was then the Stuart highway. Along the way, Bill and Flora, Craig and John visited every

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police station. The McLarens from Victoria were agog at the sights of the outback, its inhabitants both black and white and the vitality of the land. The people they visited were equally enthralled by the pale skin and fair hair inherent in the McLaren genetic makeup and most of all by Flora's stockings which at that time were not a regular part of Territory day wear. They drove and drove and when they were close to Darwin Flora who was at the wheel said to Bill, ... 'You'd better drive - I'm not sure I'll be able to manage all the traffic.' ... Ever considerate Bill took the wheel prepared to manoeuvre the family rig through the traffic of teeming metropolis of Darwin. However, as John tells us, Flora may as well have stayed behind the wheel. They passed a minor intersection at a place called Bagot Road - which seemed to be little more than a rudimentary track and continued on looking for signs of life. By this time it was about 10 o'clock at night and before they knew it they were at what we today call Brown's Mart and what in those days was Police Headquarters. John clearly recalls the rhythmic clanking coming from the building next door. This turned out to be coming from the printing press in the old NT News premises that then stood between Police HQ and the original Anglican Cathedral.

The family went from there to a house at Myilly Point where John remembers the sea roaring below, the sea breeze and walls of louvres. As the years progressed both John and Craig have memories of the sound of "singing sticks" coming up from the beach below at all hours of the night. They remember Bill coming home as red as a beetroot from sitting under a tree with tribal elders at remote locations. They remember Flora making morning or afternoon tea for the latest lot of police recruits - a kindness she carried on into the 1970's.

Saus Grant, retired Assistant Commissioner gives us a further perspective of Bill as Commissioner of Police in a letter to John and Craig last week. He says, ... 'Your Dad was a father figure, a man who inspired respect, a revered boss. I was proud of his leadership, knowing that he was always doing his best for the Police Force and he NEVER EVER grandstanded or attempted to improve his image at the expense of his staff or the department. If anything he was modest to a fault. He was the most honourable person I have ever been acquainted with.' ...

Saus goes on to talk about Bill's many achievements including:

Increasing the establishment of the force from 150 to more than 500 sworn members.

Building and staffing the first Police College and opening training opportunities both locally and interstate hitherto not available.

Providing genuine equal opportunity to women police

and

Changing the culture of the job for the better, in so many ways.

He also mentions that Bill never wasted a dollar of Government money if he could avoid it and that although Police in the Northern Territory were paid overtime he doesn't believe Bill ever really accepted the concept.

Cyclone Tracy was a catastrophic event in the life of the City of Darwin and represented an enormous challenge to the Northern Territory Police. John has already quoted from a report compiled by a Canadian researcher, which highlighted the leadership role of the Commissioner.

The police response to the disastrous effect of Cyclone Tracy was conducted in the finest tradition of the Northern Territory Police.

The report, compiled for the Emergency Communications Research Unit of a Canadian University, also describes how the public turned to police for advice and information, how they poured into the station seeking hope and how they also carried their dead to the police station for want of a better place to go. I add this information because I see it as important that the context and the grimness of those times be remembered when we talk of Bill's role.

It should never be forgotten that the first response to the devastation wrought by the cyclone came from the police and that its promptness and compassion were engineered and managed by the Commissioner. The Anglican Bishop of Darwin at the time, Ken Mason said, ... 'Darwin was not short of its own heroes in this time and not least among them was our own Northern Territory Police, led by a quiet gentle man, who is the Commissioner, whose calm nature gave such a quiet, confident and consistent leadership.' ...

Bills subsequent investiture as a Member of the Order of Australian 1976 recognised both the efforts of the Northern Territory Police and his leadership and



management of the crisis. He was also the holder of the Queens Long Service and Good Conduct Medal and the National Medal. Bill represented Australia at two Interpol General Assemblies in 1971 and 1975.

It is not surprising given his Scottish ancestry and background that Bill was careful with a dollar. Throughout much of the time he was Commissioner the Northern Territory was an outpost of a federal administration based in Canberra. Reporting and acquisition mechanisms could best be described as convoluted and difficult.

Against this background the growth and development of the Northern Territory Police Force under Bill's stewardship was remarkable. Notwithstanding the improvements he brought about in terms of bricks, mortar and equipment, his most profound effect was upon the most essential element of the organisation - the people. He was widely known amongst the troops as 'Silver Bill' and while that nickname arose from his distinguished head of hair it seems particularly apt to recall it today - he simply shone.

Bill's essential decency and compassion shone through every aspect of his day to day activities. Every graduation speech he made to assembled recruits included a segment on personal hygiene in the tropics and concluded with the advice to ... 'Make sure you wear a singlet.' ...

Over a number of years in Victoria and the Northern Territory Bill was responsible for the coordination of security at a number of royal visits - so much so that on one occasion the Queen looked at Bill, stopped and said, ... 'Well I think I've seen you before.' ... On another occasion the Duke of Edinburgh was so impressed with the cycle escort he received that he asked Bill if he could personally thank the members concerned. Bill and the Duke approached the riders stopped in formation on the airport tarmac, engines idling. Concerned that the noise of the motor cycle engines might make conversation difficult Bill discretely motioned to the lead motor cyclist to turn off the engines. With the instant obedience and willingness to please, inherent in Senior Constables, the leader immediately interpreted Bill's gesture to mean that they should leave. They did forthwith leaving behind a Duke with an outstretched hand and a bemused Commissioner.

Bill retired as Commissioner of the Northern Territory on his 62nd birthday in October 1978. At

the time of his retirement the Northern Territory Police had evolved from an outback organisation run on a shoestring to a modern policing establishment well placed to serve the Northern Territory as it moved forward under self-government. Many of the changes and innovations that occurred in the year immediately following Bill's retirement were the direct result of forward planning proposals he had put into place.

Bill's remarkable life contributed much to the Northern Territory and to Australia. Over this next phase of his life his level of contribution did not diminish and if anything increased.

He became the inaugural Security Coordinator at Parliament House Canberra from 1979-81 and later, on a consultancy basis, set up the security arrangements for the new Parliament House in Canberra.

On his return to Darwin he served for many years as a Justice of the Peace including regularly sitting on the bench of the Darwin Magistrates' Court.

His involvement with community groups continued unabated. He was a member of the Road Safety Council of the Northern Territory and the Queens Jubilee Trust. He was a member of the Royal Show Society for over 20 years and was actively involved in show administration and judging every year.

He was a Freemason for 55 years and was at various times a Grand Master and Grand Standard Bearer and remained an active member of Lodge Foelsche until his death. His lodge activities included acting as Chaplain and involvement in the distribution of Christmas hampers supplied to the needy by the Masonic Foundation in South Australia and the Northern Territory. Bill also somehow managed to find time to accept a commission to write a history of the Northern Territory and its police forces.

Bill was an active and dedicated Rotarian over many years and was a former President of the Rotary Club of Darwin. He was an immediate past president of the Northern Territory Council for the Aging and was actively involved in the activities of the Red Cross. Last, but not least, he served as a member of Neighbourhood Watch and Zone coordinator over many years.

I said at the outset that one of the tallest trees in the Territory forest has fallen. As with any tall tree a life of this magnitude is hard to fully see and appreciate from the ground. Perhaps it would be better to try



and imagine how Bill would have summed up his life

had he been asked. I think he would have said something along the lines of being grateful to have had the opportunity to do his best for his family and for the community. We should be grateful that the remarkable life of a fine and a truly gentle man has touched us all in ways only we as individuals can know.

Bill goes home today in this church he has belonged to for over thirty years and on behalf of the

Northern Territory Police and the community of the Northern Territory I thank his family for sharing this occasion. I extend our sincere condolences to John and Craig, Asha and Barbara and to Kiran, Taara, Robert and Peder.

Pride makes us do things well. But it is love that makes us do them to perfection.

*Delivered by Commissioner
Brian Bates AM APM*



William James (Bill) McLaren AM

13 October 1916 - 10 May 2000

*By
Bill Wilson*

William James (Bill) McLaren , police officer, voluntary worker and humanitarian.

Bill McLaren was born on 9 October 1916. On leaving school he became an engine cleaner a trade he followed until he became a police officer.

Bill joined the Victoria Police at age 21. He served with distinction until 1967. During his Victorian service he had a varied police career serving in general duties as a uniformed constable and sergeant as well as in the Criminal Investigation Branch. He served in many places throughout Victoria including Geelong, Warnambool, Malvern and at Headquarters in Melbourne. Bill was promoted to sergeant rank in 1956, Inspector 2nd Class in 1964 and Inspector First Class in 1965. He attended the English Police College at Bramshill where he undertook executive training. Whilst in the United Kingdom he served on attachment to several English and Scottish forces including the London Metropolitan Police at New Scotland Yard. On his return to England he was appointed Director of the Officers' course at the Airlie Police College.

He married Flora in January 1953, a marriage which lasted over 45 years. Bill and Flora had two sons, John and Craig. Later Bill became the grandfather of Kiran, Taara, Robert and Peder.

Bill was serving as an inspector when selected as Commissioner of the Northern Territory Police Force in March 1967. At that time, the force had a mere 159 members who were stationed at the Territory's 26 police stations. Bill introduced new ideas to the force and was instrumental in changing it from its frontier structure to a modern force that used up to date equipment. One of the major structural innovations during his time as Commissioner was the introduction of Districts and Divisions. Like many Territory public servants of his day, he was hampered by centralised Canberra control of the Northern Territory which existed during most of his time in the Territory. Short of funds to carry out many of his reforms, Bill never complained but carried on as far as



finances would allow. He never blamed anyone else for the difficulties he faced in implementing his reforms. As a testament to his ability to work around these problems, by the time that he retired the force had grown to a strength of over 500 men and women.

Bill represented Australia at two Interpol General Assemblies in 1971 and 1975. He also studied police administration during visits to Canada, United States, Japan, Hong Kong and Singapore.

He was Commissioner at the time of Cyclone Tracy and led the Darwin based members of his Force throughout the cleanup operation. He was commended for his leadership during the Cyclone by Major General Alan Stretton in his autobiography *Soldier in a Storm* and by Ken Mason, the Anglican Bishop of Darwin who said ... 'Darwin was not short of its own heroes in this time and not least among them was our own Northern Territory Police. Led by a quiet, gentle man, who is the Commissioner, whose imperturbable nature gave such a quiet confident and consistent leadership'¹ Bill was invested as a Member of the Order of Australia for his leadership after the devastation of Cyclone Tracy.

Bill and Flora took a keen interest in recruits to the police force and ensured that they and their families understood the Northern Territory and the difficulties which faced them. Always ready with a kind word to a new member, Bill reassured many new constables who might otherwise not have remained with the force.

After 40 years in policing, 11 of them as Northern Territory Commissioner of Police, Bill retired on his 62nd Birthday in 1978. At his retirement parade Chief Minister Paul Everingham paid tribute to Bill's long and distinguished police career and his contribution to the Northern Territory.²

He went on to serve as head of security at Parliament House in Canberra where his integrity and organisational abilities were well regarded. He returned to Darwin to live permanently after his tour of duty in Canberra was completed.

After his retirement Bill continued his association with a number of community organisations, among them the Uniting church, The Road Safety Council of the Northern Territory, the Rotary Club of Darwin, the Northern Territory Council on the Ageing, Neighbourhood Watch, the Northern Territory Justices' Association, the Probus Club of Darwin, Order of Australian Association and the Queens Jubilee Trust. He became

president or chairman of many of these organisations.

In 1980, Bill was commissioned by the Northern Territory Government to write a history of the Northern Territory Police, a task he undertook with great pride. The resultant manuscript remains one of the best source documents on Northern Territory policing yet produced.

Foremost among his community activities were his involvement with the Royal Agricultural Society of the Northern Territory (Darwin Show Society) and the Freemasons. He was a member of the Show Committee for over 20 years and was responsible for the allocation of space for the majority of that time. He also helped in judging for the prestigious Queen Elizabeth trophy awarded at the Royal show each year. He had been a Freemason for about 55 years and had been a Past Grand Master. He achieved the rank of Past Grand Standard Bearer and remained an active member of Lodge Foelsche until his death, often acting as the chaplain. Another of his activities was arranging for the distribution of Christmas hampers supplied by the Masonic Foundation of South Australia and the Northern Territory to those in need.

Bill was awarded membership of the Order of Australia on Australia Day 1976. He also held the holder of the Queens Long Service and Good Conduct Medal, the National Medal and was a Justice of the Peace.

The most used observations about Bill McLaren from those that knew him were that he was both a gentleman and a gentle man. Daryl Manzie, a Minister in the Burke Government, and a former police officer, wrote that Bill McLaren was, ... 'A true gentleman, who never stopped working for the betterment of Territorians'

¹ Keith Cole, *Wind of Fury*. The Full Story of the Great Darwin Disaster. Melbourne. Rigby, 1977. p 150.

² Paul Rosenzweig. *For service awards of the Order of Australia, for service to the Northern Territory 1975 - 1995*. (Darwin; Historical Society of the Northern Territory. 1995) p 56.

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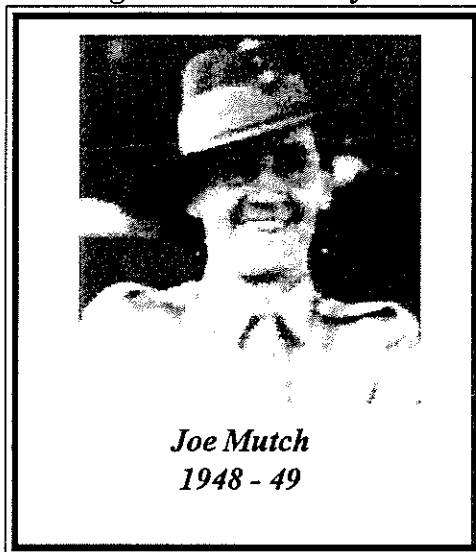
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Prepared by Bill Wilson 14 May 2000

MUTCH, Verdun Joseph (Joe)

2 August 1916 - 12 May 2000

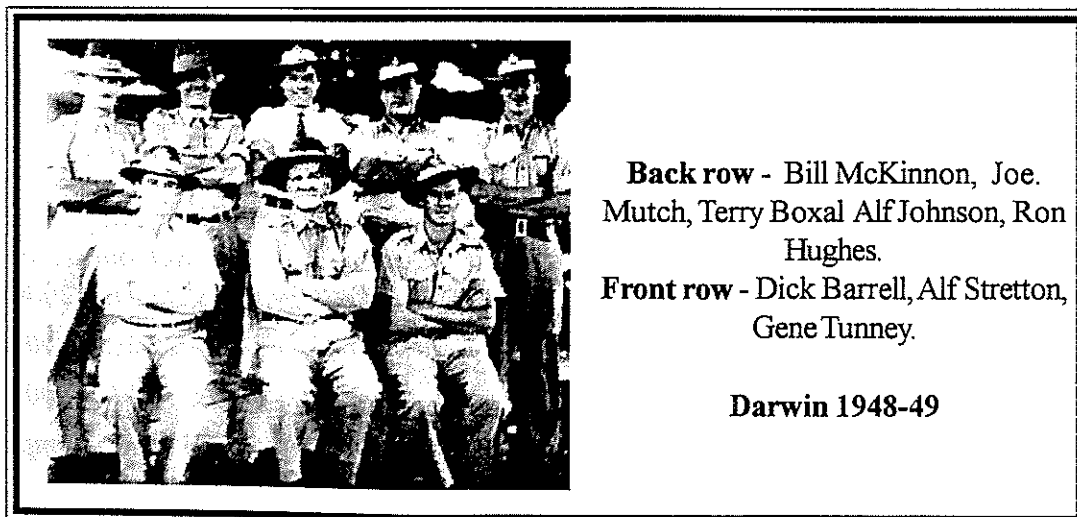


*Joe Mutch
1948 - 49*

Served

1937	Darwin
1938 - 1940	Tennant Creek
1940 - 1941	Hatches Creek
1941 - 1942	Darwin
1942 - 1944	Finke
1944 - 1945	Rankine River
1946 - 1952	Darwin

**Joe is survived by his two sons,
Kevin and Bob**



Back row - Bill McKinnon, Joe Mutch, Terry Boxal Alf Johnson, Ron Hughes.

Front row - Dick Barrell, Alf Stretton, Gene Tunney.

Darwin 1948-49



MEMORIES OF JOE MUTCH

by

Ed Ferrier May 2000

When I joined the Northern Territory Police Force in 1950, Sergeant Verdun Joseph Mutch was O.I.C. of Information Branch, as the plain - clothes section was called. It comprised Joe and two Constables (there were only 58 men in the whole Force).

An excellent investigator and Court witness, Joe used to top Detective training courses in Sydney, in competition with interstate detectives.

He was extremely handy in a dash of fisticuffs, not uncommon in those days and he had a comprehensive knowledge of the legislation we worked with.

One day a large group of Aborigines assembled at the then native settlement at Berrimah and 'marched' on Darwin, armed with axes, shovels, garden forks, etc. in a quest for whitefella wages.

Supported by the handful of men who could be mustered at such short notice Joe halted the procession a couple of miles out of town and arrested the leader under a section of the little - known Observance of Law Ordinance, which was a relic of the troubled times after former Administrator Gilruth was run out of town. In the subsequent Court proceedings the prosecution presented an Aboriginal witness who was a housemaid at Government House and who had overheard a conversation. An intelligent, fine - looking lass she was obviously a witness of truth and was plainly bored by solicitor 'Tiger' Lyons' harping attempts to portray her otherwise. She broke up the court suddenly and quite irrelevantly turning to Lyons and saying, ... 'You don't think blackfella get all that money do ya?'

Many people who had to use camels regarded them as unpleasant beasts incapable of affection. Joe wasn't one of them. He told me he was sitting out in the desert one day with his back against a tree - stump, writing up his journal when one of his camels silently approached from behind and started gently nuzzling the back of his head!

Joe left the Northern Territory in 1952 and joined the South Australian Police Force, where he quickly proved his worth as a detective. Although it is some decades since I last saw Joe I am saddened by his departure. He was a good man.

JOE MUTCH

by

Garth Macpherson May 2000

This special edition of *Citation* has already paid tribute to Bill McLaren, a former Commissioner of the Northern Territory Police Force. It has been mentioned that Bill was commissioned to write a History of the Northern Territory and its Police Forces. It is from that volume the following notes are extracted with appreciation to the memory of Bill McLaren.

Joe Mutch and Bernie Rochford were new additions to the Northern Territory Police Force in 1937, serving in Darwin.

In 1938, Joe was transferred to Tennant Creek where he served until being transferred to Hatches Creek in 1940. In 1941, Joe returned to Darwin and was present during the Japanese air raids on Darwin. It has been recorded that on 19th March 1942 Joe was part of a team headed by Sergeant Bill McKinnon that reported no less than 54 "daisy cutter" bombs landed in the area from Gilruth Neck, Myilly Point to Daly Street.

During lapses in the air raids, a major concern was to evacuate the civilians. Those who left were only able to take a limited amount of luggage with them. As a result, many homes and business premises were left fully furnished, stocked and equipped. Therefore, looting became a major problem the police had to deal with. Building fires were an added problem that required police attention. Some buildings caught fire during the actual raids but others caught fire days later, possibly the result of damaged electrical supplies.

Police present during the bombing of Darwin were later transferred to southern postings. Joe was one of them. Later in 1942, he was transferred to Finke where he remained for two years before taking over Rankine River in 1944.

In 1946, Joe returned to Darwin and was later promoted to Sergeant. As stated by Ed Ferrier, Joe displayed excellent investigative skills and in 1948, he was appointed Sergeant 2nd Class with a view to commencing the Information Branch or CIB in the Northern Territory as it is now known. To gain experience and training, Joe was attached to the New South Wales Police for three months, being sworn in



as a Special Constable. He returned to Darwin in August 1948 at the completion of his training course.

During his time as OIC of the newly created Crime Section, it was recognised as an effective unit recovering a substantial amount of property and returning same to the rightful owners.

In 1951, Superintendent Littlejohn wrote of Joe Mutch –

... 'Sergeant stationed in Darwin, at present as Station Sergeant on Senior Sergeant higher duty allowance. Joined the Northern Territory Police Force on 30th October 1937.

(a) He also is one of our most efficient members. Has been in charge of various bush stations, was for a time in charge of the Information Branch. He served as a cadet in the South Australian Police Force. As a member of the Northern Territory Police Force he was sent to Sydney in 1948 where he underwent a course of special training, particularly in detective duties, fingerprint and modus operandi. In 1950 he also had a special course of training in the Victorian Police Training School, where he also obtained excellent results in the final examinations.

(b) His conduct and record in this Force have been excellent. He is particularly interested in assisting young, inexperienced Constables and he is, I should

say our most proficient member on criminal investigations.

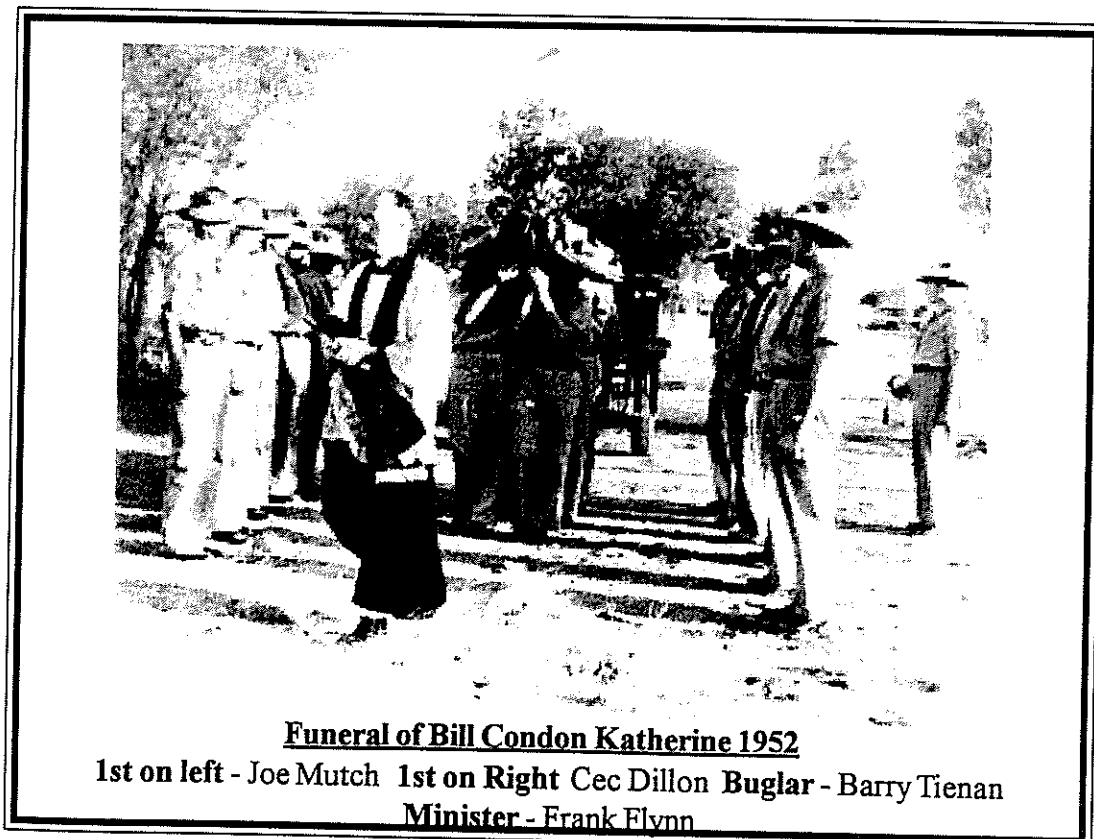
(c) He has ability in administration and organisation and I am sure would justify himself if given the opportunity.

(d) He is very suitable for promotion to Senior Sergeant and I believe he will prove equally suitable for higher ranks in due course.' ...

Possibly, Joe's greatest case was the investigation of the disappearance of George Grantham and his taxi reported on 18th April 1952. Police stations to Tennant creek, Timber Creek and Wave Hill were notified to be on the lookout for the missing taxi which was last seen at the 19 mile near Darwin late in the evening of 17th April, travelling south with two men in it. Grantham's body was located at the 13 mile on the 19th April. A post mortem examination proved he had died from a gunshot wound to the head.

Enquiries extended to Queensland and Mt Isa Police later detained Grantham's car between Mt Isa and Duchess. It was occupied by two New Australians who were arrested on a provisional warrant for murder.

Joe, Sandy McNab and Tom Hollow flew to Mt Isa with the original warrant and succeeded in having the two offenders, Jerry Koci and John Novotny



Funeral of Bill Condon Katherine 1952

**1st on left - Joe Mutch 1st on Right Cec Dillon Buglar - Barry Tienan
Minister - Frank Flynn**



extradited to Darwin, where they admitted shooting George Grantham with intent to steal his taxi. Koci and Novotny were the last two people to be hanged in Fanny Bay Gaol.

On 9th June 1952, Constable Bill Condon was shot and killed by Terry Stapleton in Katherine. Joe attended his funeral along with many other police and civilians.

On 30th October 1952 Joe Mutch resigned and joined the South Australian Police Force where he

became a very competent investigator in their CIB.

1 W J McLaren, *History of the Northern Territory and Its Police Forces Pt 2*. p.1190

(Bill McLaren was commissioned in 1980 to write the *History of the Northern Territory and its Police Forces*).

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TONY ARMSTRONG

by

Lane Crews & Dr Peter Thatcher



An endearing feature of the Northern Territory Police is that it attracts characters and develops character. That in a simple way, describes Tony Armstrong and his association with the "Top End".

Interestingly, Tony wasn't born in the Northern Territory. He was born in Wagin in West Australia in 1953 and the fact that this is not known to many illustrates Tony's unquestionable pride in being regarded as a true Territorian.

Tony's association with the Territory was due to his mother's dedication to remote area nursing and the reputation that she gained in the nursing profession was always a source of great pride for Tony. It was during



his mother's career that Tony found himself in the Northern Territory living and working in remote areas and so began Tony's life in the Territory.

Because of Tony's commitment to the Northern Territory and the Northern Territory lifestyle, he joined the Northern Territory Police Service in 1975. At this time, Darwin had been devastated by Cyclone Tracy and Tony's induction course was held in Adelaide. It is somehow symbolic that the commencement of Tony's career was affected by one of the most dramatic and serious events ever to occur in the Territory.

Tony's early career in the Police was typical of many Police of the time; by Territory standards anyway. He served in General Duties in Alice Springs and Darwin and relieved in several bush stations. Like all Territory police members, Tony had a vast array of experiences and stories to tell that reflect the humour and danger that can arise in this area of policing.

In 1985 Tony joined the Communications Section, but it was not until 1989 that Tony finally found his real calling in policing when he joined the Forensic Services Section as a Crime Scene Examiner. It is here that Tony gained his true job satisfaction and where he made his greatest contribution to the NT Police Service.

Like all Crime Scene Examiners, Tony commenced duties by attending the scenes of comparatively minor crimes but was soon required to take responsibility for the recording of major crime scenes and the collection of vital evidence. He soon became known to all the police in the Darwin area as a respected and thorough crime scene examiner. He was also known for his unyielding "stroppiness" if anyone did not observe all the protocols for crime scene preservation and restricted entry to crime scenes. This applied to police officers of any rank and many officers who outranked Tony will sheepishly remember being the subject of Tony's wrath at crime scenes.

While Tony was known by all Darwin police for his scene examinations and performances in court, he is, perhaps, best known in the Forensic Services as one of the finest technical photographers ever to work in the Forensic Services. His skill in this area was used by most members of the Forensic Services both inside and outside of the laboratory.

As previously stated, Tony was best described as a "character". Characters sometimes have a challenging relationship with authority and Tony was

no exception in this regard.

However, it was an overwhelming and redeeming feature of Tony Armstrong that any disputes or disagreements were never malicious and never resulted in any resentment. As far as Tony was concerned, when a matter was resolved it had ended. This was due in most part to Tony's irrepressible sense of humour and mischievous cynicism.

It is tempting to present a series of anecdotes involving Tony, but it is difficult to do justice to many of the most hilarious incidents in this venue.

Tony was a very social individual as can be attested to by his mates at the RSL Darwin North Branch. He had a quick sense of humour and is generally credited as raising the level of exaggeration to where it could only be regarded as an art form. It is significant though that Tony's sense of humour was never personal and few, if any, ever felt aggrieved that they had become the butt of Tony's humour.

Tony was an obsessed fisherman and often discussed 'the one that got away'. Strangely, the photographs that he produced suggested that very few fish would fit into that category. This obsession was almost matched by his passion for the St. George Rugby League club which did the right thing by Tony when they reversed a form slump while Tony was critically ill.

Surely, if the Armstrong family had a coat of arms, it would feature a leaping barramundi, a crime scene examination kit and a dragon, all in the colours of the St. George Rugby League club!

The tragedy of Tony's passing is compounded by the fact that, after working for 11 years in crime scene examination, he will never work in the new forensic science laboratory of which he would have been a most valuable contributor in its set up due to his vast and expert experience. However, while his name appears on many of the documented training programs and methods used in the Crime Scene Examination Section, Tony Armstrong's contribution to forensic science in the Northern Territory will always be noted and acknowledged by those who follow him.

The Northern Territory Police force extends its deepest sympathy to all of Tony's family and friends his partner Kaz and his sons Dane and Lyndell. It is hoped that you will be comforted at this time to some degree by a pride in Tony's contribution to the Police Force in particular and the Northern Territory in general.