

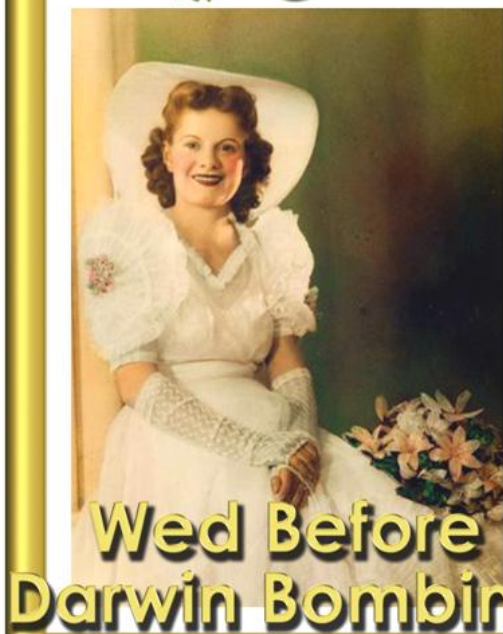
Citation

*The Newsletter of the Northern Territory
Police Museum and Historical Society Inc.*

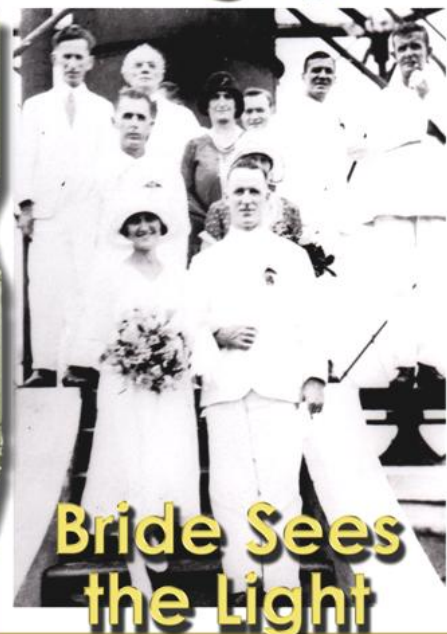
Issued: May 2010



Blushing Brides & Bombs



**Wed Before
Darwin Bombing**



**Bride Sees
the Light**

Death of "Best Known" Territory Policeman

CHIT CHAT

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

A Christmas card sent to the NTPMHS brought news that former Tennant Creek resident, Ian Cowan, 70, now living in South Australia, had been able to locate the place near Renner Springs where his brother, Keith, 27, had died in November 1955. In an earlier, unsuccessful search last year Ian left a memorial plaque on a quartz hill overlooking a green and peaceful valley. His brother, who suffered from epilepsy, died while servicing a vehicle at a quarry, and police from Tennant Creek retrieved his body. It was decided to leave the plaque in the original location, a short distance from the actual spot where his brother had died.

RECYCLED TERRITORY

From Llandrindod Wells, Powys, Wales, came a surprising letter containing a 50 year old colour slide of a Darwin wharf scene. The sender is former NTPF member, Graham Jones, #106. Into recycling in a big way, his letter was mainly written on the back of a 2007 Llandrindod Wells Lombard Car Rally handbill. Another note, on the back of a 1988 Wirra Wirra Vineyards (Australia) wine label, was a pointer to a four- page information circular sent to him for the 1986 centenary of a permanent police centre in Central Australia on which he had underlined police officers he knew. He attended and put on a slide show for the NT Police Association at the 1998 Reunion.

Graham joined the force in June 1959 in Darwin and was transferred to Alice Springs with Tony Woodroffe and Ray Miller in December of that year. Because he owned a camera, he took shots of Darwin, one being of a two-masted vessel

in the harbor before being sent to Alice. He wondered if this was the *Sea Fox*, the yacht owned by the American film star and magician, John Calvert, mentioned in *Citation*. We had the slide blown up by Kym Chilton and the vessel was identified as the Thursday Island pearling lugger, *Paxie*. The *Paxie* almost became a ferry between TI and Darwin. "Passengers" it brought here became residents, included several well known footballers and Seaman Dan, the Thursday Island song man entertainer, the subject of a recent TV documentary and frequent interviews, who spent several years in Darwin.



From the Museum archives comes this 1960 photograph (overpage) of Graham Jones in uniform in Central Australia posing with what is described as a secondhand police utility, which may have inspired his interest in recycling.



BRITISH POLICE JOURNAL

Everything a police officer, fireman and air raid warden wanted are shown in these 1939 British Police Journal advertisements. Truncheons came plain and decorated. There are a variety of handcuffs, leg irons, handbells, rattles and whistles. To help the constabulary cope with fog, lamps could be provided -oil and electric. Because of all the wildlife running about the Old Dart, a pig sticker seems to be one of the implements available.

*For Rapid and Accurate
Finger-print Records . . .*

many police photographic departments are now using the Kodak Finger-print Camera. This compact apparatus is exceptionally easy to use and light enough to carry from place to place. Photographs are the same size as the originals, and are therefore most convenient for comparison with finger-prints already recorded.

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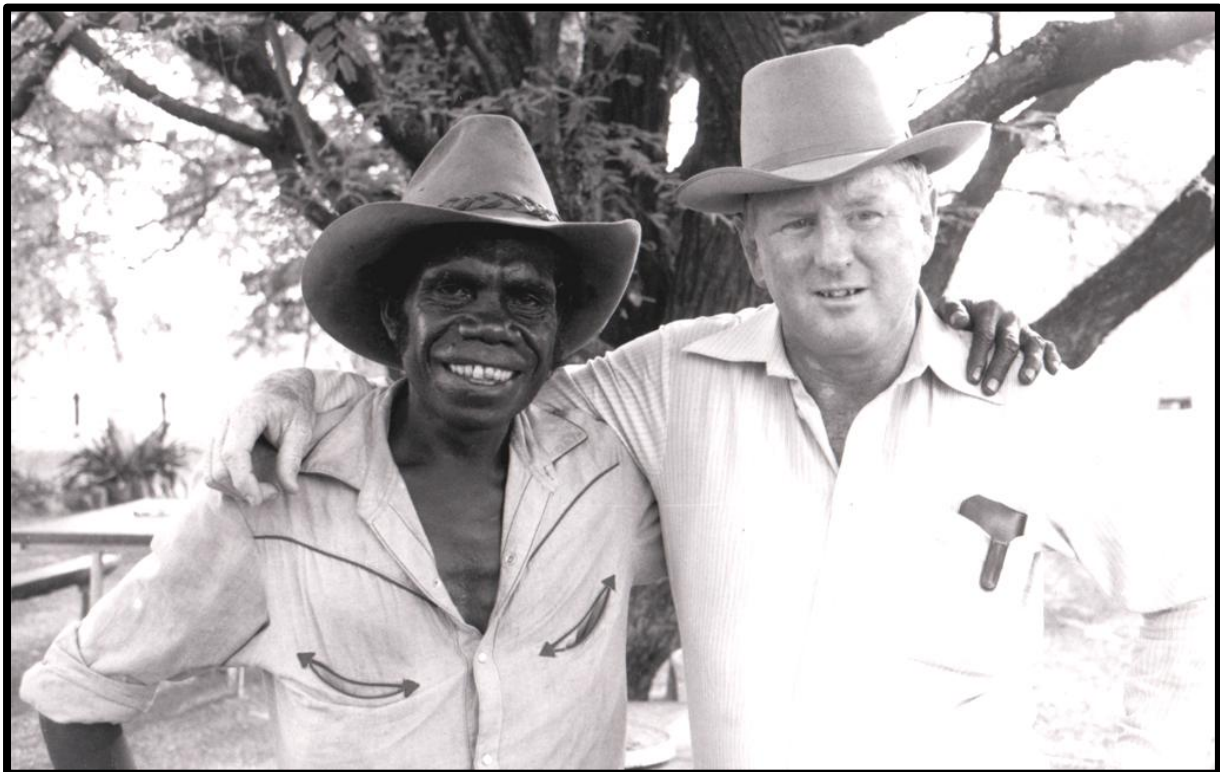
- HANDCUFFS
- GRIPS
- LEG IRONS
- TRUNCHEONS
(Plain and Decorated)
- LANTERNS
(Oil and Electric)
- BELTS
- ARMLETS
- WHISTLES
- BADGES
- FOR UNIFORMS
(Plain and Enamelled)
- NUMERALS
(All Sizes)
- BUTTONS
- BUCKLES
- BUTTON BRUSHES
- BUTTON STICKS
- GLOVES

Webbing Belts & Pouches
(See Form or Home Office Specifications) for Au
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**THE
POLICE
JOURNAL**
FOR PRACTICE USE ONLY
QUARTERLY 1/6

Harvey on last great patrol

A legendary figure in the NT Police Force, Roy (Bluey) Harvey, 75, was laid to rest in Nambour (Qld) on February 5, 2010. He served from 1957 to 1978 and his exploits and achievements were well chronicled, especially the Larry Boy Janba murder manhunt. Written up in newspapers and magazines, including a British police journal, Harvey at one stage was based at Mataranka, responsible for a beat of 3000 square miles.



Bluey Harvey and friend

The NT Police Museum and Historical Society files contain newspaper clippings and photos of Bluey including a street snap of him in a Royal Australian Navy Reserve uniform four years before he joined the force in 1957. The following year he was posted to Papunya and took part in a major search for an Aboriginal who had killed two tribal elders in a fight, had himself been badly beaten by the tribe, and escaped into the desert, making for Western Australia. In a very bad condition, he was found, taken to hospital and

recovered. After time in Alice, Bluey next went to Darwin and took part in a forlorn search for survivors from a Heron aircraft which crashed into the sea near Bathurst Island.

In 1962 he married former British policewoman, Margaret Craven (pictured overpage), who came to Australia, served in Sydney and then moved to Darwin.

During the walk off by Gurindjis at Wave Hill in 1966-7, Bluey clashed with

Communist author Frank Hardy, who campaigned strongly for the Gurindjis and wrote a book about their struggle, ordering him from the settlement on one occasion. Hardy responded to his removal by, “in no uncertain terms”, telling Bluey he’d be transferred out of the place in six weeks, and so he was.



While based at Mataranka, Bluey became famous for his dogged 40-day Larry Boy Janba murder manhunt. Larry Boy, with intimate knowledge of the area and aided by locals, went bush after murdering his 17-year-old tribal wife, Marjorie, and injuring a European stockman, David Jackson, 21, with an axe, after finding them in bed at Elsey Station, in September 1968.

The epic manhunt was national news and Harvey, assisted by Trackers, one being Tony, kept on the elusive trail in rugged country, scores of snakes being one of the hazards. The fugitive, with a tomahawk and rifle, ammunition and a dilly bag, was eventually discovered deep inside a cave

over which he had pulled a cover made from a spider web and a bush at the small entrance. It was thought tear gas may have to be called in to force him to emerge, but he was eventually talked out. As a result of the exhausting manhunt, Bluey developed pneumonia and other searchers also became ill and broke out in boils.



Under the heading, Deserves a : “well done”, the editorial in the *Northern Territory News* of November 1, 1968 (see here), praised Constable “Bluey” Harvey for his efforts saying they must surely go down as one of the outstanding performances in the history of bush manhunts. It said the bushman-police officer, at times obviously worn to a frazzle, with nerves on razor edge, did not spare himself for any day of the 40 straight on the epic search. It continued : His effort must have been something of an inspiration to others, and with residents of the area and others who took part in the search, *The News* expresses the hope that some form of recognition will come his

way. Larry Boy was sentenced to eight years' jail for the manslaughter of Marjorie and five years for wounding the jackeroo, served concurrently. He died in Darwin Hospital in 1972 from a disease thought to have been contracted during the manhunt.

Another tough assignment saw Bluey searching for a surveyor lost in the bush, his body found after two weeks, not far from a road. When a skin complaint became evident, Constable Harvey's bush Patrol days were over as he was brought to Darwin to carry out indoor work.

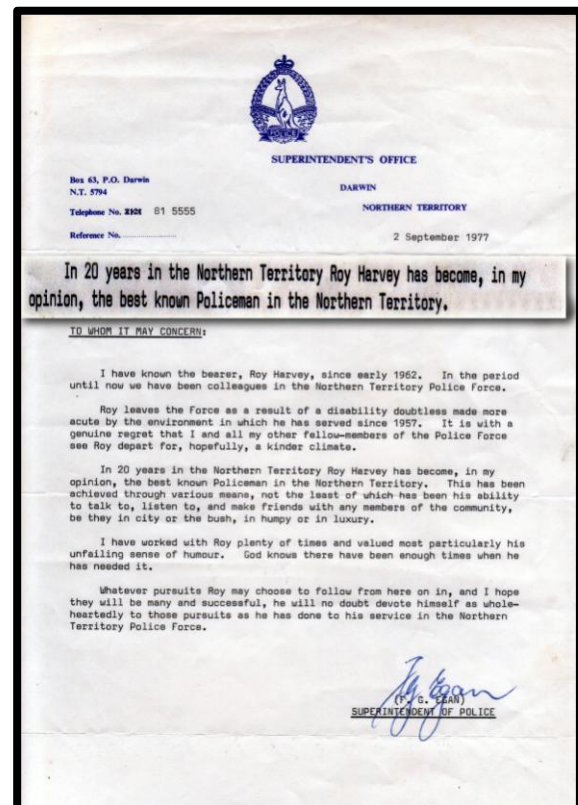
After the destruction of Cyclone Tracy in 1974, Bluey, with a staff of six, ran a cafeteria at the Darwin Police Station which prepared and served 300 meals a day.

Due to increasing problems with skin cancer, he was forced to move to a less harsh environment, retiring to Kandanga, where he and wife Margaret farmed cattle for a number of years. After the death of Margaret, his health began to decline and he entered the Hibiscus Nursing Home at Nambour in 2003 where he became a popular resident. His physical and mental health continued to deteriorate until his eventual death on February 1.

A number of retired NT police attended the funeral, including Bryce Fardell, Matt Sodoli, Keith Colebrook, Tony Barton, Neil Plumb, Bob O'Keefe, Warren Fairbairn, Keith Van Rangleroooy, Janelle Cox, Rhonda Walsh, Denny McIver, Slim Rogers and Norm Breen. Also in attendance were Bluey's sister, Dorothy, his niece, Jane, and her husband, David Sproule. All regrouped after the service for an afternoon tea and an exchange of stories about Bluey's exploits during his life.

NOTE : A reference supplied by NT Superintendent of Police, Tim Egan, in 1977 stated that Harvey, after 20 years in the force, had become the best known policeman in the NT. This had been achieved through various means, not the least of which had been his ability to talk to, listen to, and make friends with any members of the community, be they in the city or the bush, in humpy or in luxury. "I have worked with Roy plenty of times and valued most particularly his unfailing sense of humour. God knows there have been enough times when he has needed it." Administrator Tom Pauling placed a death notice in the *NT News* which read

"No more foot patrol for you Constable Harvey. Well remembered."



The Mighty Atom and Dynamic Bill Littlejohn

Kiwi journalist / author Ross Annabell was interested to read the Citation account of the recent campaign by the Police Museum and the NT Retired Police Association to have fellow New Zealander Superintendent Bill Littlejohn's surname correctly spelt as one word instead of two in directories, maps and road signs. Thorough researcher that he is, Annabell obtained a 1919 photograph of Littlejohn, taken soon after he returned to New Zealand from Britain where he had been a pilot in the Royal Air Force during World War 1, which he sent, with other information, to the Museum. Unfortunately, the caption seems to be incorrect so it is impossible to positively identify Littlejohn.



Also received at the Museum with great enthusiasm were three files covering Superintendent Littlejohn's time in the Northern Territory Police Force from Littlejohn's son-in-law, Bernie Hoffman, of Boennell's Bay, NSW.

From information supplied by Annabell, Hoffman and other sources, we have been able to compile this unusual profile of Superintendent Littlejohn who helped Flynn of the Inland and Alf Traeger set up a network of radio stations to extend a mantle of safety, including the Aerial Medical Service, in the outback.

Born in Karori, on the North Island of New Zealand, August 23, 1899, where his

father was Chief Engineer for Waimea Country Council, Littlejohn completed his education at Nelson Boys' College. His Scottish uncle, the energetic and inspiring, Dr William Still Littlejohn, was headmaster of the school. Dr Littlejohn gave Rutherford, later splitter of the atom, his first lesson in physics. Dr Littlejohn also made a name for himself when he became principal of the influential Scotch College, Melbourne.

On leaving school, Bill Littlejohn went to the Air Force Training School, Christchurch, where he obtained a wireless operator's certificate and pilot's licence. Then he worked his passage to England

and enlisted in the Royal Air Force, serving as a pilot in the war.

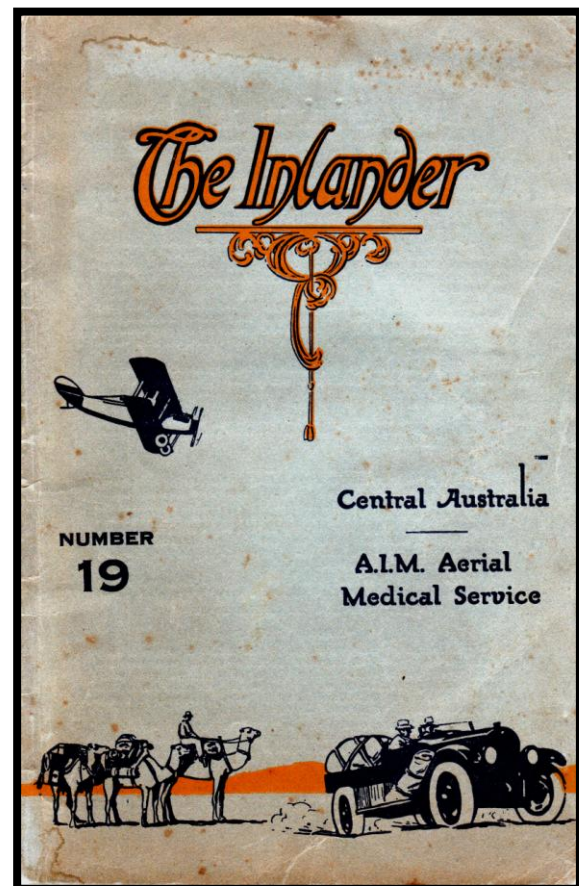
When he returned to NZ he joined the Eastern Extension Cable Company as a telegraph operator and after some time in Sydney was posted to Darwin in 1920. From there he was sent to Banjoewang, Java, for three months. A constable he befriended in Darwin suggested he should join the police force, which he did, on a salary of 240 pounds (\$480) per annum.

Sworn in as a Mounted Constable by Police Commissioner Major Dudley on April 3, 1925, his place of birth was incorrectly spelt as Kairoa. He was 6ft, weighed 12 ½ stone, had dark hair, brown eyes, a fresh complexion and had been in Australia two years and nine months. Records show that in his war service of two and a half years, one had been as a sergeant in the RAF.

Posted to Alice Springs, he formed a close relationship with Reverend John Flynn and Alf Traeger who carried out wireless tests as part of the drive to bring improved medical and communication services to the outback. Littlejohn's experience as a telegraph operator was undoubtedly most helpful to the radio experiments.

In the book, John Flynn - Vision of the Inland, by W. Scott McPheat, it stated that in October 1925 Flynn arrived in Alice with George Towns, of Sydney, with the experimental radio gear. Flynn then set off three hours later for Oodnadatta to collect two carpenters and a cook he hired in Adelaide. The next nine months saw a small labour force toiling through a long, hot summer and a mild winter. These were the McLeod brothers (the carpenters), Flynn, Commissioner Stott and Constable Bill Littlejohn. Littlejohn and Stott helped construct the first Alice Springs hospital staffed by AIM nurses, Sisters Ellen Small and Ina Pope. Alf Traeger of Adelaide

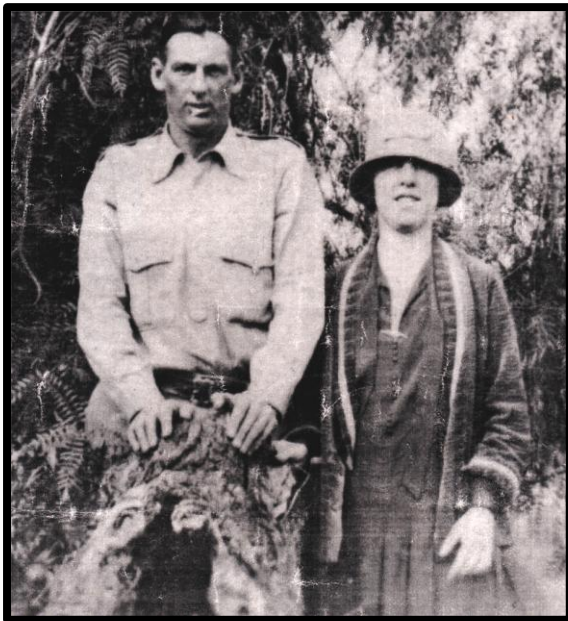
became involved in the wireless tests when Towns returned to Sydney and (Traeger) developed the famous pedal radio. A wireless base was established at the Alice Hospital (8AB) and two field stations-Hermannsburg (8AD) and Arltunga (8AE). Morse signals from these stations were well received during the evening and the early morning.



The Australian Inland Mission journal, The Inlander, number 19, October 1927, (pictured), contained this informative paragraph: Until last year, most of the nursing responsibilities (in Alice) fell to the kindly hands of Mrs Stott and other ladies of the township, while Sergeant (now Commissioner) Stott drew teeth and set bones whenever need arose. Advice was often obtained by wire, with special medicine to follow a month or so later.

It also said Bill, a member of the Littlejohn clan of Scotch College fame, kept the wireless gear in good condition. The magazine included a view of the police station at Altunga where a low-power wireless transmitter was set up in 1926 during the AIM experiments.

During that year Littlejohn was accidentally shot in the hand by his own revolver when searching for prisoner who had escaped from the Stuart Town Goal. His hand was dressed by a sister at the Australian Inland Mission who may have eventually become his wife. As a result of his wound, he was sent to Port Augusta Hospital for further treatment and accompanied an Aborigine suffering from infantile paralysis (polio). He subsequently applied for leave to marry Sister Ellen Dorothy Small while on leave in Sydney in 1928, the service performed by Reverend John Flynn.



Constable Littlejohn and wife to be.

Littlejohn had trouble with his teeth and had to go to Adelaide for treatment, an illustration of the lack of services in the Territory and other isolated parts of Australia. Apparently he did not want to avail himself of the Commissioner's dental skills.

Stationed at isolated Charlotte Waters with his family, he and his wife faced returning to relative civilization when in 1932 it was announced by the Department of the Interior that they would take up positions at the Darwin Native Compound, he as superintendent and she as matron of the Half-caste Home. All their possessions were packed into a Nash and driven 1200 miles to Darwin, Littlejohn presenting a transport bill for 45 pounds (\$90). It seems no sooner had they arrived in Darwin than it was decided Constable Littlejohn should return to the mounted police and Mrs Littlejohn be relieved of her duties.

During time stationed at Pine Creek, Mrs Littlejohn, being a certified nurse, was asked to temporarily relieve the local sister in charge of the hospital in April 1937 while she was away looking after a patient at Mataranka too ill to be moved.

In July 1941 Littlejohn went to Mt Isa for more dental care and treatment for lumbago and sciatica. His wife and two children were evacuated from Darwin in a flying boat on December 22 of that year. Then came the bombing and Sergeant Littlejohn went to Alice Springs with the Administrator.

Some of his postwar history and involvement in the rescue of Mrs Petrov from her Russian guards at Darwin Airport were covered in Citation of May 2009.

He retired in 1956 and with Mrs Littlejohn moved to Springwood, in the Blue Mountains, NSW. Later they moved to a unit in Julianna Village, Miranda, Sydney. Mrs Littlejohn died, and her husband died in hospital soon after. Reverend Fred McKay said Littlejohn died just as he lived- with the quiet dignity of a wearied oldtimer bushman.

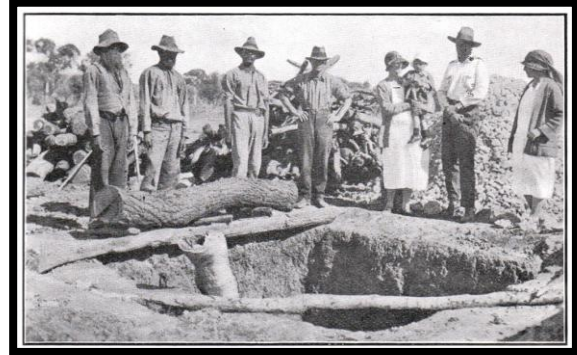
At the cremation service for Littlejohn on October 15, 1987, Reverend McKay, of the

Australian Inland Mission, said Bill Littlejohn had been earthy, independent, unswervingly forthright, never a Yes Man, contemptuous of bribes, true as steel in judgment and action. He mentioned the part played by Littlejohn in helping set up the outback pedal wireless network and the Aerial Medical Service which had a big impact on the well being of isolated communities.

Alf Traeger, he continued, had recorded that Constable Littlejohn became a special friend and gave practical help in setting up the engine room at the back of the Alice Hospital which was used to install the base wireless in the first radio experiments. Littlejohn and Traeger had shared a table in the kitchen of the Stuart Arms Hotel where they had meals together.

Reverend John Flynn, in his 1926 letters, had made particular mention of Littlejohn also vigorously assisting in chopping and carting timber for the fire in pits (see photo of pit in which tall figure may be

Constable Littlejohn) where they burnt calcite stone to make lime for the main walls of the nursing home.



These involvements indicated the spontaneous public spirit of the young policeman, and also his ready and voluntary participation in two history - making events in Central Australia-the earliest radio experiments of the Flying Doctor Service and the establishment of the first hospital in Alice Springs.

VALE BERNIE KILGARIFF

Museum life member, "Bern" Kilgariff, OAM, AM, died on April 13 at Alice Springs, aged 86, and was given a state funeral. For 27 years he served in the Territory and federal parliaments, two as Speaker of the NT Legislative Assembly and was one of the two first NT senators elected in 1975. A man of vision, patience and tenacity, he was well known and highly regarded in the Territory.

Other honours bestowed upon him included life membership of the Country Liberal Party and Knight of the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem.

A pioneering businessman in his hometown of Alice Springs , he was a farmer for 14 years and a motel manager for eight. He and wife Aileen had 11 children. During a Senate tribute to Bern his strong campaign for self government and his belief in eventual statehood for the Territory were mentioned.

An epic account of a Territory police family

During WW11, a young woman, Florice Muriel Kay, set out by ship from Fremantle bound for Darwin to marry her intended, a member of the NT Police Force, Constable Dave Mofflin. A jovial and friendly person, Dave may have been nimble on his feet playing for the East Fremantle Australian Rules side, but he was a poor soft shoe shuffler on the dance floor. He had joined the army with the intention of saving enough money for them to be married and was seconded to the police force to help cope with the build-up of military and civil personnel. Others to join up at the time were Bob Darken, Greg Ryall and Lou Hook.



Mrs Mofflin on her wedding day in Darwin shortly before the bombing

During the voyage north, Flo heard the shock news that the Japanese had attacked Pearl Harbour on December 7, 1941. There was a discussion about whether or not the ship should continue to Darwin or return to port, but the vessel resumed its northern course, Flo's wedding dress stowed away. Arriving in Darwin, arrangements were made for the wedding. Vicki Ormond, said to have been the first Miss Northern Territory, later that year to become the wife of Constable Bob Darken, offered to be her bridesmaid. Flo was given a job as

an essential worker in the hospital laboratory at the hospital where specimens were processed. Approval was given for Flo and Dave to take a day off for the nuptials in early February.

Came the big day, and Dave was left waiting in the church. The only taxi in town, owned by Keith Jessop, had been booked by Flo, but business was so brisk it did not turn up at the appointed time. Dave was left "cooling his heels" at the church for an hour before the bride and bridesmaid turned up on the buckboard of police officer Bill McKinnon.

Constable Henry Lullfitz gave her away, Bob Darken was best man and the reception was held in the police barracks, soon to be bombed in the first raid on Darwin. They went to live at Myilly Point where there were a number of residences occupied by public servants, some of the woman and children having been evacuated. Still in residence there was the rotund Joseph Wesley Nichols who held so many official positions he was known as the "legal Poo-Bah of the Northern Territory", whose wife and three children had been evacuated. Most people slept under mosquito nets.

With war tension mounting, there were blackouts in town at night and people discussed the probability that the Japanese

would attack. Despite the worry, she and her husband entertained two young American sailors off the cruiser, USS Houston, "Smithy and Fussell", at home and played Dave's jazz records. Both the Americans died when the Houston sank during the battle of the Java Sea.

Dave spoke to his wife's employer, Dr Kirkland, and it was decided that Mrs Mofflin should be evacuated by ship to Fremantle rather than stay on in at the hospital. Her husband reckoned that in the event of a Japanese attack, having her in town would complicate his response. The WA State Shipping Service vessel, MV Koolinda, was due to sail on Friday the 13th, but the superstitious skipper delayed departure for two days. If the departure had delayed much longer, she could have been in Darwin at the time of the raid. As the vessel continued down the WA coast, a steward serving soup, announced the alarming news that Darwin had been bombed.

On hearing this disturbing information, passengers rushed to the deck and wanted to know more about the bombing. Because of wartime secrecy, it was maintained there had been no deaths and none among police, the latter being true.

The sister ship, MV Koolama, sailing from Fremantle to Darwin, was attacked by a Japanese flying boat in the Joseph Bonaparte Gulf on February 20. It limped into Wyndham and sank at its mooring when eight fighters shot up the town.

The Koolinda's purser told Mrs Mofflin that the Koolama had been bombed; he advised her to go below, not to stand near the rails when on deck and not to tell passengers what had happened because it could cause panic. The Japanese propaganda identity, Tokyo Rose, gloated over the radio that half of West Australia's

shipping had been sunk, referring to the Koolama.

When the Koolinda reached Broome, Mrs Mofflin said there were what she described as US seaplanes which had brought servicemen suffering from burns for treatment at the hospital. A doctor travelling on the ship went ashore to help treat the war victims. Throughout the voyage there was boat drill which included instructions on how to abandon ship.

During the stay in port, the Koolinda sat on the bottom of the ocean due to the big tidal fall, making everyone feel vulnerable to attack. (On March 3, the Japanese did attack Broome, resulting in terrible loss of life, many of the victims, Dutch women and children refugees, packed into flying boats. Strafing of the airstrip destroyed many Allied aircraft.)

Arriving safely in Fremantle, she was relieved to receive a communication from her husband in which he said he was unscathed. In actual fact, he was lucky to be alive, almost certainly saved by the thoughtful action of his friend, Constable Bob Darken, best man at the wedding of Flo and Dave.

Having been on night shift, Constable Mofflin was sleeping in the police barracks. Constable Darken, finished giving evidence in court, came out onto the verandah of the courthouse with a view of the harbour. Hearing the sound of aircraft, he looked up and saw three formations, each of nine bombers, approaching and instantly felt they were Japanese. Remembering his mate Dave was asleep, he sprinted to the barracks, saw bombs falling like bubbles in the sky, woke him up and they were running for the back of the building when the front took a direct hit. They were blown out the back of the building under a cement tank stand, the 1000 gallon tank blown to smithereens. A Zero strafed the tank area but they were

not hit. Lying in the rubble, they each asked the other how he was. Dave said he could not feel his leg, which he had felt, applying increasing pressure, only to discover it was his colleague's leg. Mofflin's mattress was later found up a tree down near the wharf area. Darken subsequently composed a part humorous, critical poem about the bombing and the departure from town of the Administrator and senior police which was run in Doug Lockwood's book, Australia's Pearl Harbour. In part it read:

*At ten o'clock the sirens sound
All the coppers go to ground
Through the garden helter skelter
Diving to the air raid shelter*

*Mofflin's sound asleep in bed
Snoring off his bloody head
Bombs are falling all about
Bobby runs and pulls him out*

Dave Mofflin, naturally, denied that he had been noisely slumbering while bombs were falling. Constable Darken went to the post office as he had heard it received a direct hit and found the staff of 9, including Iris Bald. On the morning of February 19, he had spoken to Iris about a novel, a copy of which was in the police barracks. She decided to return to the post office rather than come with him to the barracks to get the book. He told her he would get the book and bring it to her at some stage. In his subsequent memoirs, Darken said the post office staff had not been killed by a direct hit on the building but in the slit trench in which they took refuge. He and Constable Eric "Sandy" McNab had the terrible task of arranging the bodies for removal to the morgue.

In Perth, Mrs Mofflin obtained a job with the Navy. On learning that her husband had been transferred to Alice Springs like most of the Darwin based administration,

she applied to join him. Arriving in Alice on a bitterly cold day, she was glad to see her husband, but the wives of policemen were not allowed to work and accommodation was extremely difficult to obtain. She and Dave were lucky to be given the verandah of a house which they later had to share with another police couple, Constable Lou Hook and his wife, Rose. So as not to disturb sleeping residents in the house, Dave climbed in through a kitchen window when he came home from night duty. There was no frig and the bath was supported by bricks. A copper for washing was down the backyard. Mrs Hook was a good gardener and grew lettuce.

Dave took a severe beating, teeth knocked out, from a large American soldier, well over 6ft and more than 14 stone. On his way home, Dave heard the sound of breaking glass at a shop, went to investigate, and came across a group of disorderly Americans fired up on whisky. On his own, and surrounded, he was attacked by a pugnacious soldier with a reputation for brawling.

American provosts brought the offender to the police station in an armoured vehicle and Constable Darken tried to get at the man for battering his friend, but was kicked in the face and knocked flat. The offender, Eddie Leonski, was put on the train south and subsequently murdered three women and assaulted others in Melbourne, becoming known as the "Brownout Strangler". Leonski was sentenced to death in an American military court and hanged in Pentridge Gaol on November 4, 1942. In May 1945 his remains were moved to a USAF cemetery at Ipswich, near Brisbane. In 1947, after it had been decided that all Americans buried in Australia should be relocated back to the US, the remains were transferred to an Army centre and later placed in a permanent grave.

Mrs Mofflin mentioned the savage bashing in her recollections. There was no police library in Alice as there had been in the Darwin barracks and the catalogue for the John Martin's department store in Adelaide circulated in the town.

The Mofflins were posted to Rankine River, where in May 1945 their first child, Bill, about 15 months old, received terrible burns to his feet when he toddled into the still hot ashes of an Aboriginal fire. Once in the ashes he was unable to get out and his toes were burnt off. The pedal radio did not operate on the weekend so they could not call for help. In desperation, they turned the pedal radio on in the hope that somebody had left their radio open, but to no avail.

Eventually the youngster was rushed to Mt Isa Hospital, a long and bumpy trip, and underwent series of painful skin grafts carried out by a Dr Ryan from Sydney and more in Adelaide. Mrs Mofflin lived in Mt Isa, paying for her own accommodation while her son was treated, without any help from the government.

During that difficult and worrying time, the wandering authoress, Ernestine Hill, and her son, Bob, arrived in Mt Isa gathering material for books, newspaper articles and radio talks. At the time she may have been gathering ideas for her popular book, *The Territory*. Mrs Mofflin heard the writer wanted to visit Rankine River, so approached her, explaining the situation about her son, and asked if she could come along for the ride as she wanted to give her husband a detailed account of their son's condition. It was to be an unforgettable trip, with a slapstick event which could have been straight out of a *Ma and Pa Kettle* movie.

The car, which may have been what the author described as a "caravan", had been up on blocks for some time and did not run

smoothly. Not an experienced driver, Bob, in his early twenties, crept along at what seemed about 10 miles an hour. His mother would urge him to go faster. "Alright mother," he would reply, and speed up to about 20 mph. They arrived at a junction in the road and they, including Mrs Mofflin, were not sure which way they should go. Nevertheless, Bob chugged on, and they saw a dwelling on a property with lots of animals where a woman was seen at a clothesline.

Bob immediately turned the car into the driveway and headed towards the woman, only to discover he did not know how to stop. Alarmed, the woman, fearing she would be run over, dropped her basket, chooks took off in alarm and cackled, dogs barked. There was much yelling and shouting as the runaway car circled the startled woman and her clothesline. Her husband dashed out to see the cause of the uproar. Bob banged his head when he stuck it out the window, shouting, trying to avoid the woman and other objects.

"Ernestine and I were in hysterics," said Mrs Mofflin. "We couldn't stop laughing and he (Bob) was getting wilder at being laughed at." Without stopping, they headed out of the yard, eventually found the turn off for Rankine River and Bob, thankfully, discovered how to stop the car.

Out at Rankine River, however, where they had been informed by radio about the departure from Mt Isa there was increasing concern. A search party set out, fearing they had become lost or something had gone wrong.

From Rankine River, Constable Mofflin was stationed at Pine Creek where the accommodation, the old hospital, was in the process of being renovated, the floorboards being up. Young Bill, still traumatised by his time in Mt Isa, took one look at the white beds in the building and

became upset because he thought he was back in a hospital.

Singapore ants were a problem and kerosene dipped rags were tied to the bottom of the bed legs to keep them at bay. Their son was brought up to Darwin for medical check-ups and treatment. Mrs Mofflin went to the Star Theatre one night and felt a terrible itch. Rushing to the ladies room, she whipped off her dress and found it was Singapore ants, probably brought from Pine Creek.

There was an iron ridge next to the house in Pine Creek and during electrical storms it seemed to attract lightning strikes. The RAAF sent a Spitfire down from Darwin to a Pine Creek each week, landing on a strip near the police station, to pick up eggs. At community dances in Pine Creek Mrs Mofflin was guarded by a faithful dog which would not allow anybody in the yard while her husband was away. At dances, he nipped at the heels of anyone who danced with her. Some of the military men stationed nearby gave Bill a golliwog as a Christmas present, which he adored.

By November 1945 they were back in Alice Springs where accommodation was still a problem. At one stage they lived in a boarding house and then the postmaster's house. Young Bill was attracted to trains and one day a police officer on duty at the railway station saw him sitting in the carriage of a train which was about to depart for Adelaide. He was promptly removed and brought home.

Dave Mofflin had an unusual experience while carrying out a census on patrol in a car a long way from Alice Springs and suddenly began to lose his eyesight from what was said to be Sandy Blight or conjunctivitis. Unable to drive back to Alice because he was "blind", his plight changed when an Aboriginal unexpectedly

announced he could drive and did so. Dave said the man probably saved his life.

Newcastle Waters, with the luxury of a two storey house, was the next posting for Mofflin. There adventurous Bill was gored and thrown over a fence by a bull. He had climbed into the goats' yard to have a look at the animals. Also in there was a young bull which charged and tossed him out of the yard. Two worried Trackers, Long Tommy and Bennett, brought him home covered in manure, but after a bath and a close examination he appeared to have escaped serious injury. The bull died soon after. Years later, Tracker Bennet informed Dave Mofflin that he and Long Tommy had killed the bull for attacking Bill.

The Mofflins' first daughter, Kerry, was born in the Tennant Creek Hospital on the hot New Year's Day, 1948. Jugs of iced lemon and orange were handed out and Dr Webster and the sisters looked after patients. Bill had another ordeal in Tennant – stretched out on what looked like a bench, there being no fancy operating theatres in those days, his tonsils were removed and he was "scared stiff". Dave was made a sergeant that year. Over the years Dave made special footwear for his son.

When the family came to live in Darwin in 1949 Kerry developed bad prickly heat. Picnics were held at Mindil Beach. Dave Mofflin walked dogs on the beach and one day he was there when a boy, Mike Poulter wading up to his chest, was the victim of a marine stinger. Dave grabbed the boy, put him over his shoulder and ran up the steps leading from the beach to the nearby hospital at Myilly Point. The boy survived and became a prominent Australian Rules footballer, playing for Norwood. Another boy, stung while wading, died on the beach. He was an only child and his Army father was distraught with grief. The Mofflins had another daughter, Carol.

When the Mofflins live in Marella Street, Darwin, the house rocked to jazz sessions. Kerry (Mofflin) Clark, now residing in Perth, colourfully described the jazzy scene at home. Her father, she said, while he owned a clarinet could not play the instrument, and it was his “dream” to one day be able to master the licorice stick.

While unable to play the clarinet, he sure could whistle. “We had the most amazing jam sessions at our house in Marella Street” she said. “Looking back, I am not so sure what the neighbours thought, and

pity help them if they did not like jazz. The musicians would thump it out and when they weren’t playing, the gramophone was cranked to the max. Today, my sister and I love jazz, and I am sure it stems back to those childhood days when we had no choice but to listen to Dad and his mates whooping it up. Glenn Miller, Tommy Dorsey, Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong, Count Basie, Ella Fitzgerald and, later the Dutch Swing College Band, to me are synonymous with Dad and our childhood in Darwin.”



Taken at Newcastle Waters Police Station, from the left, kneeling, Don Robertson (possibly a stock inspector), Constable Dave Mofflin, Mrs Mofflin and daughter Kerry, Bill Mofflin, Mrs Robertson, Ruby and Tracker Long Tommy. Mrs Mofflin often recalled her life at Newcastle Waters and paid special tribute to the help given her by Ruby while Dave was away on patrol. Long Tommy and Bennett finished off the Bull that had attacked Bill.

In 1952 Sergeant Mofflin compiled an interesting report on all firearms held in the Darwin Police Station and the superintendent’s office with a detailed

history of most of the guns. Commissioner Bill McLaren, in his history of the NT police force, said Sgt Mofflin had produced a “rather formidable” list of

weapons held privately by police officers. One constable had 13 firearms. Two firearms, a .45 calibre short barrel Enfield revolver and a .44 long barrel Smith and Wesson, were recommended for the police museum. Sergeant Mofflin stayed on in the force until retirement in 1970, after 29 years of service, receiving the BEM in 1972.

In an oral history interview carried out in Perth in 1983 by Rhonda Jamieson, Mrs Mofflin, with justification, was critical of the NT Police Force and its treatment of staff in earlier years, but felt conditions and the relationship had improved greatly.

The Museum spoke to Bill Mofflin, 66, in Perth on a visit back to Australia from Ireland, his wife being Irish. Bill well remembered the golliwog and said it had

been stolen by a drover at Newcastle Waters. His father had later found the golliwog tied to the front of a vehicle in a drovers' camp at Banka Banka and brought him back home. The golliwog survived for a number of years but finally disappeared. Bill said there was a photograph of the golliwog in the family possessions but it had also vanished with the passage of time.

Most of Bill's schooling took place in Darwin, his contemporaries being the children of police families such as Nancy and Robert Mannion, Alan Hook, and the son of lawyer Dick Ward, Richard. Bill became a diesel mechanic. John Gordon and his wife, Jackie, were close friends of the family. John Gordon was Kerry's godfather and she and brother Bill attended John Gordon's funeral in November 2008.

TRANSFER

Member **Barry Frew and wife, Clare**, who both contributed much to the running of the Museum have now **settled in New South Wales**.

CORRECTION

In the article about former Darwin boxer **Tommy McDonald** in the November 2009 Citation it was incorrectly stated that Kiwi fight promoter, **Terry Alderton**, had been the chief boxing instructor at the Darwin Police and Citizen's Youth Club. McDonald, who now lives in Canberra, is expected to visit Darwin in June, willing to swap yarns instead of leather.

Ernestine Hill - A nomadic writer

A prolific writer, Ernestine Hill had a long association with the NT, her first visit to Darwin being in the 1930s, accompanied by her young son. Her glowing newspaper accounts of the Granites goldfield in 1931 had caused a stockmarket boom, a goldrush and a wild claim that Alice Springs could become the economic hub of the nation. The 1933 annual report of the NT said that during the winter months of the previous year fairly rich alluvial gold had been discovered on a hillside near the Granites by Mr J. Escreet and mates.

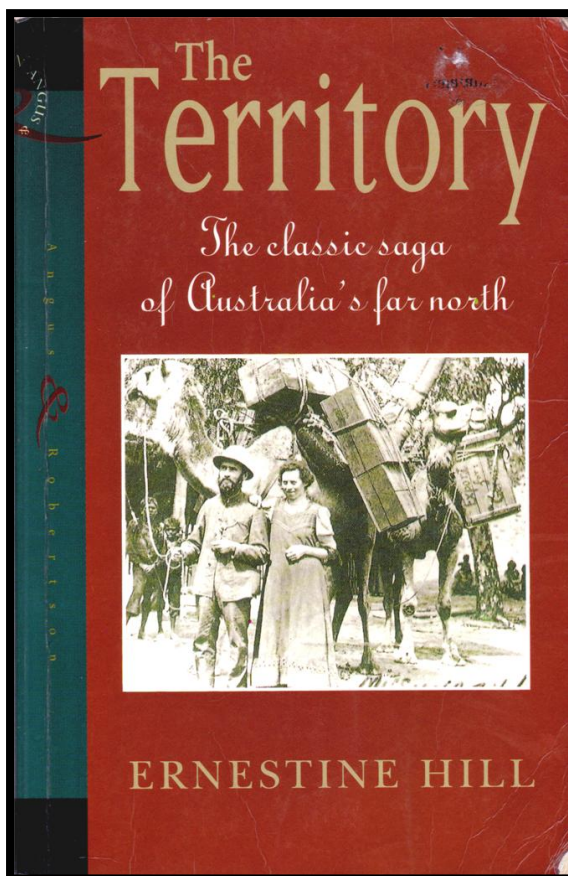
News of their discovery had attracted many to the area, including a well equipped prospecting party from Brisbane which had its own wireless transmitting set. Publicity had caused great excitement in the southern states and a rush set in, about 170 applications for mining leases being quickly lodged. Wheeling and dealing in mines and options took place.

A few weeks after the initial rush, most had departed the field, driven away by the harsh conditions, the shortage of water and the failure to find payable gold. While the rush was at its height, Mining Warden Rogers, surveyor A. M. Blain- later the NT MHR- and Constable Lynch were temporarily stationed at the Granites.

During early 1933, there were about 20 people, including three woman on the field, trouble broke out when some miners persisted on scratching for alluvial gold on the Burdekin Duck lease held by Chapman's Gold Mines (N.L.). Ernestine Hill was accused of sensational reporting when the rush fizzled out. Despite this, the dynamic "Pop" Chapman brought in bars of gold to Alice Springs in powdered milk tins and later owned the *Centralian Advocate* newspaper, his residence in the town called the Pearly Gates.

Even though Hill was savagely criticized for her glowing reports about the goldfield, admitting a sense of guilt in later years, much gold is being won from the Tanami Desert today through underground mining and extensive prospecting is underway.

The Great Australian Loneliness, about the outback, was the title of her first book, published in 1937. Hill travelled light, with a typewriter, taking copious shorthand notes. A contributor to *Citation*, author, historian, journalist and publisher,



Glenville Pike, knew Ernestine Hill and her son, Bob. He told of the occasion when she and Bob were staying at Yorkey's Knob in North Queensland, and Glenville, his mother and aunt, were living at Machan's Beach, near Cairns in the 1950s. The families visited each other regularly and discussed the Northern Territory. The first time Glenville went to Yorkey's Knob to see Ernestine, he called at the pub and asked where Ernestine Hill was staying. "Ernestine Hill ?- Never heard of him." was the reply. Manly, with a deep voice, Glenville said Ernestine had closely cut hair and chain smoked. Pike's mother was nonplussed by the fact that Ernestine "wore trousers", long before it became common for women to wear slacks.

A topic of common interest was the old homestead at Oakey Creek, near Cooktown, where Ernestine had spent about 18 months working on her bestselling novel about navigator Matthew Flinders, *My Love Must Wait*, published in 1941, soon selling more than 60,000 copies, before she moved on. Pike, his mother and aunt had lived in the same homestead, trekking there overland with packhorses, before Hill took up temporary residence.

In her popular book, *The Territory*, first published in 1951 by Angus and Robertson, with decorations by Elisabeth Durack, she described Port Darwin as having been the shabbiest seaport on the Australian coast. Dealing with the NT Police Force, she wrote that a mountie or two had been attracted from the Canadian North -West as had stalwart Australians like Eric McNab, Ted Morey, Tas Fitzer, described as a Kiwi, but in fact Australian who had been educated in NZ, and Tony Lynch down in the Centre.

Pike said The Territory had been colourfully written, exaggerated in parts, each place in the NT said to be about at

least 300 miles from the nearest habitation, separated by "jungle". She, like popular writers Ion Idriess and Frank Clune, had been criticised by academics and historians who had rarely if ever ventured out of cities. He paid no attention to such critics who had neglected or made Australia's history of exploration and settlement deady dull for so long.

Pike felt her son, Bob, who had been to university in WA, seemed to bask in his mother's fame. Some years after the Yorky's Nob contact, Pike was driving along and came to the bridge over the Burdekin River at Bowen, North Queensland, and there was Bob on the side of the road, with a swag, trying to thumb a lift to Brisbane.

According to the online *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Ernestine Hill was born in Rockhampton, Queensland, in 1899, the only child of Robert Hemmings, a factory manager from London, and his second wife, Margaret Foster, a Queensland schoolteacher. A bright student, in 1916 she had published *Peter Pan and Other Poems*, with a preface by Archbishop James Duhig. After a time as a typist in the Department of Justice library it is said she began preliminary studies for a law degree at the University of Queensland. However, she became involved in the newspaper world and at one stage was a sub editor on *Smith's Weekly* in Sydney where the manager was the outstanding ideas man, Robert Clyde Packer, known as RC, father of the late media mogul, Sir Frank Packer, grandfather of James Packer.

On October 30, 1924, her son. Robert was born. According to the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, he was rumoured to be R.C. Packer's son, although he was never publicly acknowledged by him. Soon after the birth, Ernestine assumed the surname Hill.

About 1931, says the Australian Dictionary of Biography, Hill began a decade of travel writing primarily for Associated Newspapers, where RC was managing editor. (Another online reference to Hill says that after “the death of her husband ”in 1933, she embarked on a career of fulltime travelling and writing)

It is interesting to note that Frank Packer and renowned Sydney journalist Eric Baume went out to the Granites with a geologist, Professor Madigan, to investigate reports of the fabulous gold find to try and determine if it was genuine, the verdict being that it was “a fiasco”. It was an uncomfortable trip in more ways than one, the artesian water out there acting like Epsom and Glauber Salts

Professor Madigan was not impressed by what he saw and it was said that half a million pounds (\$1 million) had been invested in four weeks in a wildcat scheme based on greed. Baume (pictured below) used the experience to write the book *Tragedy Track*.



During her wanderings about Australia, Hill in 1932 met the Irish journalist, Daisy Bates, a former wife of Breaker Morant, and wrote syndicated articles about her entitled *My Natives and I*. Hill later claimed to have ghost written Bates’s book, *The Passing of the Aborigines*

(London, 1938). Published posthumously, Hill’s book *Kabbarli* (Sydney, 1973) was a tribute to Bates.

Her 1937 book *The Great Australian Loneliness*, with much Territory content, sold well in Australia and America and was widely read by US troops during WW11 to get the feel for Down Under. Another popular book was *Water Into Gold*, about the history of the Murray River irrigation area and the dried fruit industry. In 1940-42 she edited the women’s pages in the ABC Weekly and became the first creative writer to be appointed an ABC commissioner. She fought long and hard to have her son exempted from military service, claiming he was a pacifist, in poor health, needed as her research assistant.

In 1946, according to the Australian Dictionary of Biography entry by Margriet R. Bonnin and Nancy Bonnin, Hill bought a caravan and she and Bob resumed wandering. During that period, the West Australian novelist, Katharine Susannah Prichard, wrote that Ernestine could cope with flies and red back spiders galore. She went on to describe her as... “a strange otherwhereish creature with big beautiful eyes, a hoarse voice and curious incapacity to argue logically about anything.” Her 1947 book about Flynn of the Inland - *Flying Doctor Calling* - was also successful.

Over the years she accumulated a huge collection of notes with ideas for plays, novels and film scripts which were carted about Australia in trunks. She planned to write an epic novel, Johnny Wisecap, about an albino Aboriginal, but it never eventuated despite claims by her that it was just about ready to be published.

In her final years, suffering from malnutrition, emphysema and with little money, she settled down in Brisbane,

where she died in August 21,1972, and was buried under a tree in the Mount Gravatt lawn cemetery. The Ernestine Hill collection, including her typewriter, is stored in the Fryer Library, University of Queensland. (Also in the Fryer is author Xavier Herbert's collection which includes a painting of Sadie Herbert.) The Hill collection contains manuscripts of published works and unpublished working drafts ; background research material; an extensive photographic content ; many manuscripts in her own version of shorthand. An indication of her extensive travels is revealed by the captions on thousands of her photographs and negatives in the Fryer.

Territory subjects include several police stations, views of the Granites, the Henbury meteorite craters, Pine Creek, Palm Valley, the old pub at Borroloola and one of the local hermits, Roger Jose, who appears to have built Ernestine a bough shelter, perhaps a gunyah? There are shots of Joel Cooper's buffalo shooting camp, several of the characters in *We of the Never Never*, Bill Harney and his wife after their wedding, Kitty Pon and her Darwin Sunday School, the Fort Hill home of poet and clerk of courts Frederick Macartney. An "old priest" is seen

standing at fretwork teak doors, made in Hong Kong, at the Darwin joss house, "bombed into the mud" during the war. There is a 1930s Chinese wedding procession near the Tree of Knowledge in Darwin, women crossing Cavenagh Street with umbrellas and a Larrakia corroboree

Available for viewing on the Queensland Art Gallery website is a painting of Ernestine, by Sam Fullbrook, done late in life. She is shown wearing a blue dress. Normally reluctant to be photographed or painted, the painting was organized by her son, Bob, who knew the artist, so she agreed to sit for him.

REFERENCES: Northern Territory Archives Service - NTRS 226, Typed transcripts of oral history interviews with "TS" prefix, 1979 - ct Florice MOFFLIN, TS 425 and Alfred Charles MOFFLIN, TS 94. Northern Territory Police Museum and Historical Society documents including memoirs of Constable Bob Darken. Conversations with Mofflin family members, namely Ms Kerry Clark of WA and Bill Mofflin, Ireland, and author Glenville Pike, Mareeba, relating to his dealings with Ernestine Hill and her son.

TIPS FOR NEW RECRUITS

From a bygone era come some of the qualifications needed to be a constable in the NT.

- * Must be man (no mention of women in the force in those days) of vision and ambition, an after dinner speaker, a night owl, able to work all day and half the night without incurring any overtime, and appears fresh the next morning.
 - * Must be able to drive camels, trucks, Caterpillar tractors, horses, sheep, goats and assorted antiquated vehicles.
 - * When in town must be expert talker, dancer, bridge player, snooker player, diplomat, financier, capitalist, philanthropist, astrologist, pathologist, chemist, doctor and gynaecologist.
-

An unusual wedding venue

The Point Charles Lighthouse, across Darwin Harbour, was the venue on Christmas Eve 1930 where Constable Eric “Sandy” McNab married Edith Miller. The bride was the only daughter of the lighthouse keeper, Victor Miller, DCM, and Mrs Miller. Matron of Honour was Mrs W.Wilson whose husband was employed at the lighthouse. The wedding breakfast was held on a verandah which was decorated by lighthouse staff. A write up in the *Northern Standard* classed the wedding as “unique” as it had never heard of one taking place in a lighthouse. In the NT Police Museum and Historical Society archives are photographs of the wedding, including this one taken with the lighthouse in the background. Reverend Davies, formerly of the 11th Battalion AIF, of the Church of England, travelled from Darwin aboard the launch *Katinka* to perform the marriage ceremony, described as quiet but pretty. Best man was Constable Hugh Deviney, “supported” by Mr N.Macrides. Christmas was spent at Point Charles.



McNab wedding party.

As mentioned in the Mofflin family article, Constable McNab was in Darwin the day of the first Japanese attack. His brave actions that day were also mentioned in Doug Lockwood’s book which detailed the important part McNab played at Darwin Hospital. After several days, it was discovered that McNab had broken ribs,

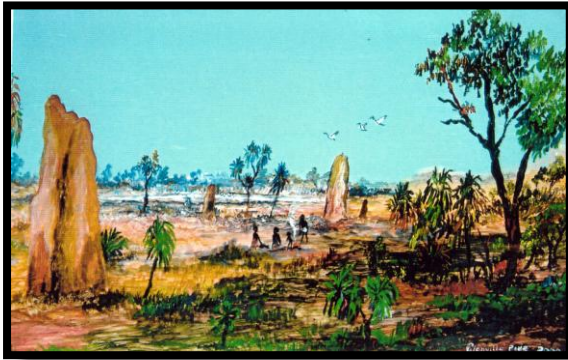
burst ear drums, amnesia and shock. He was transported to Adelaide for medical treatment. As a result of his heroic performance during the bombing he was awarded the British Empire Medal for courageous conduct and devotion to duty . Having survived the Japanese attacks, he subsequently died from injuries received during Cyclone Tracy.



It was devilishly hot for Reverend Davies when he posed with the McNab wedding party aboard the boat before they set out from Darwin for the Point Charles Lighthouse.

Fond NT Memories

A strong supporter of Citation and a great source of information and ideas, journalist/author, Glenville Pike, is stoically soldiering on after being diagnosed with terminal cancer. Late last year he painted this Territory landscape in acrylic from memory while in an Atherton, North Queensland, nursing home. Some people, who had obviously never been to the Territory, looked at the anthills and wanted to know what were those “tree stumps” sticking up in the scenery. Glenville, now in a Mareeba retirement home, has melanoma of the right ear, needs a walking frame to get about, and is still busy writing for the North Queensland Register, researching and wrapping up the publication of his book about North Queensland tinfields.



Over the years he campaigned to have archives relating to North Queensland available in the north instead of being stored away in Brisbane. Townsville, especially the James Cook University and the council library, now have a large amount of archival material relating to the north. His own extensive photographic collection has been lodged with the Cairns Historical Society. The move to close the Commonwealth Archives office in Darwin and transfer its records south was anathema to him.

Through dogged research and tracing the footsteps of early explorers and settlers, speaking to oldtimers, following pioneering trails by car and on horseback, Glenville amassed a vast amount of knowledge about Australia's colourful past. At his own expense, he took up residence in the old mining boomtown of

Charters Towers to take copious notes about early numerous people and events in the mouldering files of the *Northern Miner*. Included in the voluminous note taking were details of people who were connected with the early days of the Territory, some of them the so called Borroloola hermits, one of whom wrote for the *NT News*.

The editor of an early Australian encyclopedia was amazed at the wealth of information Pike supplied for a chapter dealing with Australian explorers and pioneers. He was commended for his research and writings about the explorer Ludwig Leichhardt who disappeared. His theory about where Leichhardt vanished, here in the Territory, has proved correct in light of recent findings. Johnny - come - lately historians, besotted with footnotes and scholarly and dull presentation, at times bleated that Pike did not source his information.

STOP PRESS: Pike has just about completed the biography of a pioneering Queensland woman who was in Cooktown during the 1947 cyclone.

Citation solves nom-de-plume mystery

In true Sherlock Holmes fashion, Citation donned the office deerstalker, whipped out the magnifying glass, even plucked the violin to aid contemplation, and uncovered the double life of a former NT Police Force officer with literary skills. The case arose when we were browsing through the interesting police section in Darwin's NT Geneological Society, a valuable source of information on many subjects. A Society member was busily sorting out and cataloguing donated research files of Darwin author, Pearl Ogden. In a pile of tearsheets from the *Hoofs and Horns* magazine were numerous Territory Letters attributed to John Stockman who obviously knew much about the NT Police Force.

For example, in September 1957, John Stockman wrote that the chairman of the NT Police Arbitral Tribunal, Mr Justice Kriewaldt, had rated Darwin's climate as being such as to be included in the top category of disagreeable climates. The judge also remarked on the high cost of living and added the price of a Sunday newspaper (airlifted in from south) was such that he could not afford one. These comments were made during the hearing of an application for a new police award. The tribunal, consisting of the judge, Sergeant Jim Mannion and a member of NT Administration, brought in increases across the board.

The December 1958 edition carried an item about a run of sickness among senior police officers. During the last two months **Sergeant Frank Fay and Jim Mclean** had retired because of ill health. **Inspector Bill McKinnon** had been in hospital with a perforated ulcer and was south, his return doubtful. **Inspector Sid Bowie** was absent on two months' sick leave with heart trouble. **Inspector Stokes** had left Darwin to take up the post as **the Australian representative in the Cocos-Keeling group**.

In the meantime, "that long suffering backstop", **Sergeant Jim Mannion**, had stepped into the breach to carry on. The

final comment: " He (Mannion) shouldn't miss out on his promotion this time." Going on this praise, a lesser sleuth may have suspected the mysterious writer was Mannion, who had journalistic skills, doing a bit of self-promotion, but no.

A valuable clue surfaced when some of Stockman's articles were illustrated with photographs by one **Bert Mettam**, a former NT policeman. Further on in the fascinating Ogden documents we stumbled upon part of the typescript of a short story written by Mettam about a brutal buffalo shooter. From time to time Stockman wrote items related to buffalo shooting, one in 1954 saying the business was at a standstill in the Territory because of the failure of the market. There was even a book review by him and another handwritten account of a road trip from Adelaide to the NT which mentioned the Sundown Murders and said author Bill Harney was the popular ranger at Ayers Rock (Uluru).

Armed with this growing dossier of evidence about the identity of the scribe, we contacted *author/historian/publisher* **Glenville Pike**, who also contributed to **Hoofs and Horns**, to see if he knew this Stockman. Yes, almost certainly, Mettam had been the author of many interesting items in the magazine. (**Hoofs and Horns**

ran advertisements for Pike's *North Australian Monthly* which he started with the financial and literary support of Darwin's **Jessie Litchfield**, several contributors being former NT mounties.

Conclusive evidence banking up, we tracked Bert Mettam to his **Adelaide** lair and gave him the third degree; eventually, he cracked under the withering interrogation. Laughing, 90- year- old Bert confessed : " Yes, I was John Stockman." His nom -de- plume had been bestowed upon by the owner of the magazine, **Alec Williams**, of Adelaide. Contributions had also be made to the **Mulga Wire** column in the same magazine and other publications.

When *Citation* blew Bert's cover as John Stockman, he regaled us with tales from his early life in the NT and childhood brushes with the law. Born in the Darwin Hospital on February 6, 1919, he was the son of Evlampia Holtze and Alfred Mettam, his father, a plumber, having come to Darwin to work in the construction of Vestey's meatworks.

Bert's maternal great grandparents were striking and talented people; great grandfather Maurice Holtze, born in Hanover, later part of West Germany, graduated in botany and horticulture at the Royal Gardens, St. Petersburg; his wife, Evlampia, was Russian. According to Bert, Holtze was involved in a **brewery venture in Russia** and something went wrong. As a result, he rushed home one day and told his wife to quickly pack up a small amount of their possessions and the family fled, migrating to Australia with four children in 1872, ending up in Palmerston, later to become Port Darwin.

Holtze at first worked as a guard at the Palmerston Gaol and was later put in charge of the Darwin Government Gardens at Doctors Gully in 1878. He later moved

to the present Botanical Gardens site where he conducted many experiments and won prizes at interstate shows. Because of his fame, he was appointed director of the Adelaide Botanical Gardens in 1891. Both he and his wife were buried on **Kangaroo Island**, South Australia.

Their son, **Nicholas**, took over as curator of the Darwin Botanical Gardens and was also the Government Secretary. One of his daughters, **Evlampia**, named after her grandmother, married Bert's father. **The NT Place Names Register** says the Mettam's were a talented couple who held evening socials in their house which included singing, talks and piano recitals. Mrs Mettam taught violin and piano. The Darwin **suburb of Ludmilla** is named after Bert's great aunt, **Ludmilla Holtze**. Mettam Road is named after Bert's father.

Recalling his childhood years, Bert said he and other boys regularly climbed a tree, one of several, near the picture show, which enabled a free view of movies. From time to time, spoilsport police officers arrived on the scene with torches and flashed the beams up into the branches. "It was just like a flight of startled cockatoos," Bert chortled. "We took off, running in all directions."

Another event at the Star Theatre he remembered were the regular private screening of movies to approve films as being fit for viewing by Aboriginals, a form of censorship. Dr Cook, the Chief Medical Officer, and somebody else from Aboriginal welfare would be ushered into the "dress circle" and the film rolled by **Tom Harris**, the theatre owner.

Bert attended the Darwin Public School where he said the best teacher ever to come to the Territory was Ernest Tambling, whose son, Grant, became a Territory politician. A visitor to the school had been the author **Ernestine Hill** (see

Mofflin family article this issue) who had her young son with her. The boy was left with someone while she went gathering material for her writings.

In 1930, Bert's mother died in childbirth when he was 10. His father, who had been persecuted for his union involvement, ill and struggling on the dole, died in 1931. Bert was left to look after his brother, John, three years younger than he. Aged 13, Bert left school and went to work as a messenger boy in the Lands Branch with other offices nearby, including the Mines Branch assay section. To get the position he had to sit an examination with another boy, and pipped him in a test. The job involved pushing a heavy bike fitted with a basket back and forth between the offices where he was based up to the government offices on the Esplanade and the Administrator's office in Government House. He knew of **author Xavier Herbert** when he was the pharmacist at the Darwin Hospital which then overlooked Doctor's Gully. Herbert's novel, *Capricornia*, had upset a lot of people in town, he added.

As the years went by Bert joined the militia and was a clerk in the **Mines Branch** by 1939. The next year he joined the regular army and was in the 2/29th Infantry Battalion as a Platoon Sergeant in **Malacca** at the time of the **Pearl Harbour** attack. Falling back to **Singapore** before the Japanese onslaught, he became ill and was in hospital there, having a beer on his 22nd birthday, his last for three and a half years, as he became a prisoner of war. During his time on the **Thai-Burma railway**, mostly only clad in a loincloth in the blazing sun, starved and beaten, he saw many of his mates die. His ordeal was included in **On The Line Stories of the Thai-Burma Railway Survivors** by **Pattie Wright**, Melbourne University Press, 2008.

After the war, before discharge, he applied to the NT Government Secretary, Harold Giles, who he knew from his earlier days in Darwin (Giles having even been the pound keeper back then), for a clerical position in Alice Spring, starting in July 1946. There he met **Sheila Trainer**, a nurse, who had been in Darwin, and they married in 1949. He joined the force and was posted to **Timber Creek and Maranboy**.



There appears to have been a “romantic” start to his writing career. The dire shortage of women had been discussed one evening by single police officers over “a cup of tea”, Bert insisting there was no beer available at the time. Having been a good letter writer and keen to take up the pen, he wrote to *Hoofs and Horns* saying there was a fine bunch of men in Central Australia who would like to correspond with members of the opposite sex. Boy, did those letters flood in.

Bert said his mother had kept a large diary in Darwin and both parents had encouraged him to become educated and express himself clearly in writing. During his wartime ordeal he had the urge to take notes, keep something of a diary. He did not do so because the Japanese reacted ferociously to anybody caught writing anything down : “Christ!- You were in terrible trouble if they found you doing this. On moving camp, they would tear the place apart looking for any written material hidden away. Some people, of

course, did keep a kind of diary, but I don't know how they were able to do so." Afflicted by skin cancers caused by the exposure to sun during the war, he went south for treatment and was advised to quit the Territory as it would aggravate his condition. Over the years he would lose an eye, nose and ear and was reported as saying he would have nothing to hang his glasses on if he lost the other ear.

Moving to **Adelaide**, and because he could not live on "fresh air", he obtained a job as storeman in a music and electrical store in Rundle Street. In addition, he began writing material for *Hoofs and Horns* under the name of John Stockman. Items were also provided for another section in the magazine, *Mulga Wire*. His vast knowledge of Darwin in particular and his experience in the police force gave him a wealth of ideas for writing, including short stories. Much time was spent in the public library, researching and reading newspapers. While in the library he delved into the records relating to the Holtze family which had contributed much to the development of the Territory and South Australia. A great granddaughter of Maurice and Evlampia Holtze, Wynniss J Ruediger, published *The Holtze Saga* in 1988.

Bert had dealings with the renowned bushman, R.M. Williams, and later did saddle repair work and set up a saddlery business near **Morphettville Racecourse**. The family suffered a terrible blow when a daughter and three grandchildren were killed in the 1983 bushfires. While talking with *Citation*, Bert said he did not get around much now because his driving licence had been taken away. Even now, when he went shopping, **Mrs Mettam** walked so fast he could not keep up with her.

He sent his regards to **Pearl Ogden** whose research papers put us on the trail of John

Stockman. Of course, we could have asked her at the outset for the identity of John Stockman, but it would have been too easy. Besides, we enjoyed the manhunt. Discussing *Citation*, Bert said the magazine's founder, **Jim Mannion**, had filled its pages with great stories about the early days of the police force.

Naturally, Bert was able to reveal yet another side to another literary minded member of the force, **Constable Vic Hall**. Hall, he said, liked singing and had a "crackly", distinctive voice. In Hall's autobiographical book, *Outback Policeman*, first published in 1970, he told of the time he burst into song when he and his boss, **Major Dudley** were forced to walk for eight hours after the car they were travelling in broke down. Major Dudley joined in the singing, which conjures up a fascinating scenario - the Commissioner of Police and a lowly constable engaged in a sing-along. As they both had served in WW1, some **French ditties** may have been included as they legged it along the rough track.

There is an interesting batch of Bert Mettam photographs in the NT Library online collection. These cover his early childhood in Darwin through to his time at Timber Creek and Maranboy. The ones taken in Darwin present an image of the happy life he and his brother led with their enlightened parents before the tragic death of his mother, followed soon after by that of his father. A 1923 shot shows Bert, sporting a bowtie, posing with his parents and brother. In another fine study taken two years later, he again has a bowtie and long socks as he and brother pose with their mother, a rocking horse in the background, at their Myilly Point residence. Bert and brother John are seen in a group of children in fancy dress. Bert appears to be dressed like the silent movie child star, Jackie Coogan, a cap slewed across his face; another boy is decked out

to be a rooster. Bert hams it up in his father's coat tails in another snap.

There is a 1949 photo of Bert and his wife sitting on railings with Wason Byers, a controversial cattleman, given to brawling, at Timber Creek. Bert and policeman Ted Morey are shown together at what seems to be strange for the bush- a white picket fence- at Maranboy. Bert's mother is the subject of several photos-aged 15 with a violin, said to be a pupil of the Adelaide Conservatorium of Music; dressed for tennis in Darwin with a racquet; married, in white, with a parasol. While she is buried in the pioneers cemetery in Darwin,

her husband died and was buried in WA. There is a photograph of boys, including Bert and John, returning to Darwin aboard the Koolinda from WA where their father had gone seeking work, apparently without much success.

Pearl Ogden has written seven books about the NT. When she started the Katherine Historical Society back in the 1970s, the first letter she received with information was from Bert Mettam, which caused delight and fuelled her enthusiasm for gathering material about the Territory to turn into books.

PATRON AND SPONSORS:

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