



The

Citation

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY POLICE
MUSEUM & HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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COMMITTEE MEMBERS

President Mr Sean Parnell
Vice President/Public Officer
Mr Denzil McManus
Secretary Mrs Val Watters
Treasurer Mr Danny Bacon
Curator Ms Janell Cox
Committee Mr John Rowe
Mr Doug Smith
Mr Graham McMahon



**Mounted Constable
John Charles SHIRLEY**

*Born Clonmel, Ireland
27 September 1856*

*Joined SA Police
10 March 1877
3rd Class Trooper*

*1 June 1879
2nd Class Trooper
Believed to have been stationed Alice
Springs Telegraph Station
in 1880 & the first stationed there*

*1 July 1882
Promoted to
First Class Mounted Constable*

*23 July 1882
Transferred to Barrow Creek*

*7 November 1883
Died of thirst - the first Police Officer to
lose his life in the Northern Territory*

MAY HE REST IN PEACE

OUTGOING PRESIDENT'S REPORT TO THE AGM

At last year's AGM Mr Graham McMahon raised the matter of recognition of our Police Trackers for their many years of work with the Northern Territory Police. A number of meetings, discussions and letters have now provided us with agreement on having a plaque recognizing their contributions to be placed in each and every police station throughout the Northern Territory. Funding has been provided in the current 2003/2004 Budget and the first of these plaques should be ready to be unveiled in the next couple of months.

The outgoing Committee consisting of myself as President, Sean Parnell as Vice President/Public Officer, Jan Woodcock as Secretary, Danny Bacon as Treasurer, Janell Cox as Curator and the committee members of Denzil McManus, John Rowe, Val Watters and John Woodcock have all worked hard towards the betterment of our Society.

Preservation and conservation of our collection has largely been worked on by Val Watters and Rosemary Rowe who spend at least two mornings a week toiling at this task. To those two ladies in particular – thank you – your contribution is immense and we sincerely hope that you will continue assisting us into the future.

Although no new 'traveling exhibitions' have been prepared this year, we still maintain our five exhibitions ready for display at any time. The NT Police Association Conference here in Darwin later this month will have the "police stations" exhibition on display for their enjoyment.

Work is continuing on two major commemorative events in the next six months:

- ✦ the 120th Anniversary of the death of Mounted Constable John Charles Shirley who perished in the performance of his duty in the vicinity of Attack Creek, 72kms north of Tennant Creek whilst searching for a murderer; and
- ✦ the 90th Anniversary of the death of Inspector Paul Foelsche, our first Commissioner to be held in Darwin on 31 January 2004.

Our Oral History project is moving along nicely. We have now completed in excess of 60 interviews in Queensland, Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia and here in the Northern Territory. This project will continue into the future. Thanks must go to our trained interviewers: John Rowe, John Woodcock, Andy McNeill, Janell Cox, Danny Bacon, Steve Bird and Glen Lynch – their time is valuable to us.

With the pending move of the Executive of the NT Police into the new Police HQ in the city, space will become available for the Police Museum to relocate into the Peter McAulay Centre. We are currently working towards opening our museum to the general public. This is a major project and one that will require some dedicated workers to achieve this aim. One that I am sure we will do with flying colours.

Our financial situation has recently been boosted by Commissioner Paul White who has promised us \$10,000 per year over three years. We received our first installment in mid July. On behalf of all our members, Commissioner, thank you sincerely for this support. It is obvious that you are happy with the way that our

Society is providing assistance to the NT Police on historical matters and we hope to be able to continue this great working relationship into the future.

Doug Smith
OUTGOING PRESIDENT

INCOMING PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings to all members reading this issue of 'Citation'. Having had the honour of being nominated President at our recent AGM I hope to be able offer my time for the betterment of the society. I look forward to serving with our current committee and congratulate them on their election to the committee and working on the interesting projects we have planned for the next 12 months. This includes the commemoration of Mounted Constable Shirley's death at Attack Creek, the Foelsche Memorial and our move into our new premises in the Foelsche Room at the Peter McAulay Centre.

Once again thanks to all for your support of our society and remember that the society will only ever be as good as the contributions that we the members make to it. The satisfaction is in giving and preserving the history of the proud Police Force which we have served.

Sean Parnell
PRESIDENT

CURATOR'S ANNUAL REPORT

The past twelve months has been very busy for the Museum.

Training Modules:

- Conservation encapsulation of books - provided by the Museum & Art Gallery of the NT
- Creative Volunteers Workshops – consisting of 6 modules (Networking with Communities; Carry Out Business Planning; Plan and Program Events; Work with Collections; Develop Funds and Resources; and Undertake Marketing) – these workshops are being conducted between July and November

2003 – 2 members of our Society have been nominated to attend each session.

Travelling Exhibitions:

Although no new "travelling exhibitions" have been prepared, we continue to maintain our current five exhibitions ready for display.

Professional Development:

- I attended the Museums Australian National Conference in Perth in May to undertake professional development for the furtherance of our Museum.

This visit also provided me with the opportunity to introduce myself to the members of the WA Police Museum and to have extensive discussions in relation to both our collections. As a result of this meeting, we now have a mutual agreement on the exchange of information.

Preservation and Conservation:

- Preservation of files and photographs commenced in January 2002. To date we have completed 235 individual police officers' files that include in excess of 1,500 photographs. These files all vary in size with some having more than 50 items in them.
- Cataloguing of newspaper clippings has commenced, including clippings dating back to the 1950s and some even earlier.
- Protection of the uniform collection has commenced with padded hangers and covers being made.
- Preservation of Police magazines and official documents dating back to the 1950's.
- Preservation work has also commenced on the saddlery items.

Volunteers:

I would like to thank our small but very dedicated group of volunteers who have been working on the above projects over the

past year. Special thanks must go to Val Watters and Rosemary Rowe who manage to call in to the Museum at least twice every week. Thanks also to Steve Burke, David Watters, & John Rowe who have also spent many hours assisting me with these tasks. We invite more of our members to become involved as we have a large task ahead of us that will only be achieved with assistance.

Grant Applications:

I have been involved in applying for a number of Grants both Federally and locally seeking funding for projects that we are conducting or proposing. They include:

- **Regional Museums Support Program 2002/2003** through the Northern Territory Government to assist with staff salary and professional development - \$20,000 - received
- **2003 Northern Territory History Grants** through the Northern Territory Government to continue recording the working histories of police men and women who have served ten years or longer in the Northern Territory Police Force – applied for \$7,000. Closed 2 May 2003 – no response to date.
- **Community Support Program** through the Darwin City Council to research and prepare an exhibition titled “**The Role of Police in Darwin during World War II and assistance provided during regional conflicts**” re-applied for \$3,000 - March 2003 – unsuccessful.
- **Community Heritage Grants 2003** through the Australian National Library to undertake storage and environmental control of the photographic collection held by the Northern Territory Police Museum – applied for \$7,000 – Closed 30 June 2003 – Decision not made until October 2003.
- **Regional Museums Support Program 2003/2004** through the Northern Territory Government to employ a Project Manager to prepare our Museum ready for public access and assist with

professional development - \$45,968 – no response to date.

Along with these Grant Applications I also applied for a Bursary to attend the Museums Australia Conference in Perth through Museums Australia. I received the maximum amount of \$500 in relation to this.

Marketing Plan for Sponsorship:

Work is continuing on a “Marketing Plan” for the Museum seeking sponsorship from Corporations. This document is still being re-developed due to our impending move to the Peter McAulay Centre. It is anticipated that they will be sent out in November/ December 2003.

Oral Histories:

Our Society was successful in obtaining a grant for \$4,000 from the 2002 History Grants. Since receipt of that money in mid 2002 we have achieved the following aims:

- Six people have been competently trained to use the correct methods of recording the interviews onto minidisk recorders. These people are located in Melbourne, Alice Springs and Darwin.
- Interviews have been conducted in Darwin, Alice Springs, Adelaide, Perth and various centres around Queensland and Victoria.
- A total of 4 minidisk recorders have been purchased along with ancillary equipment totalling around \$4,000 in expenditure.
- Over 50 interviews have been conducted to date with more scheduled over the coming months.
- All completed interviews have had their “Contents Sheets” typed by me and forwarded onto the Oral History Unit of the NT Archives Service.

As mentioned above, we have applied for further funding for this project and are now awaiting a response in relation to this.

Commemorative Events:

Two major events are currently being worked on for the next year. They are:

8 November 2003 – 120th Anniversary of the death of Mounted Constable John Charles Shirley. This event is being held at Attack Creek (72kms north of Tennant Creek) and at Tennant Creek.

31 January 2004 – 90th Anniversary of the death of Inspector Paul Foelsche. This event is being planned in conjunction with Lodge Foelsche here in Darwin.

More information on these two events will be forwarded to members in the near future.

This concludes my report for the 2002/2003 year.

Janel Cox
CURATOR

MOUNTED CONSTABLE URIAH WILLIAM HOLLAND

The Northern Territory Police Museum and Historical Society Inc is indebted to Mrs Shirley Semmler, daughter of Mounted Constable Uriah William Holland, who has kindly forwarded photographs and copies of diary entries made by her father when he was stationed at Timber Creek and other Stations throughout the Northern Territory.

Mounted Constable Uriah William Holland was born on 19 July 1880 in Victoria. He joined the South Australian Police Force on 1 March 1907 at the age of 27 years. He arrived in Darwin on 18 April 1908 and became a member of the Northern Territory Mounted Police. Mounted Constable Holland remained in the Northern Territory Mounted Police Force until 9 June 1917 and served at Pine

Creek, Timber Creek, Anthony's Lagoon and Darwin.

The following is an extract of Mounted Constable Holland's diaries, and gives a good insight into the life of one of our pioneering Police Officers, when the Northern Territory was indeed a frontier. What the Diary does not tell us is the degree of difficulty and hardship experienced by police officers in those early days.

The diary entries relate to all manner of police duties and also include details of investigations, patrols and other enquiries carried out in the police district. The following entries were made by Mounted Constable Holland and Senior Constable Dempsey in 1910 whilst stationed at Timber Creek. The entries have been reproduced verbatim and may be difficult to follow at times.

* * *

**Spearing of Condon by natives
31 March 1910 - Timber Creek Police
Station**

I was speared by blacks last night at Bullita Station, it was one of the Bullita boys that did it. A gin went away for a day and during the night the boys came and told me she was in the creek and would not come up so I went to tell her to go up to the camp, when up they jumped with spears and speared me in the back, but luckily I saw for it. I had no firearms with me.

I remain yours. H Condon

* * *

Timber Ck Police Stn

April 15 1910

Sir,

I have the honour to report leaving this Station on April 1st in response to the letter from H Condon, Manager of Bullita Station, to the effect that he was speared by natives on the night of March 30th. I arrived at Bullita Station on the night of March 30th. I arrived at the Station at night and there saw Condon who stated that on March 30th a gin named Maggie, employee of the Station had broken open a box containing tobacco and from there stole some tobacco and when this was discovered went in hiding in the creek. About midnight Toby and Minnie (a boy and Gin employees at Bullita) came up to the homestead and informed him that the Gin Maggie was down in the creek hiding. They enticed him (Condon) to go down and bring the Gin up. He proceeded towards the creek without firearms. In the meantime Toby and Minnie disappeared, and when he, Condon was within 20 yards of the beforementioned creek the Gin Maggie made her appearance. He said to her "Come on back to your camp, don't be frightened I have another box" and so he turned on his heels to retreat, and he saw a tall blackfellow rise up and the next instant he felt the pierce of a spear in the back. He immediately ran for the house pulling at the shaft of the spear in the meantime, to extricate it from his body. He then dispatched the cook, G. Inward to inform the Police. In the meantime he barricaded himself in the house until my arrival.

During the absence of G. Inward to inform the Police, the natives returned to the homestead and Condon saw several of them through the cracks in the wall stalking around. On this he fired a shot and the natives decamped.

Condon showed me the spot where the assault was committed, a distance of about 200 yards from the Homestead, on the bank of a small creek. I gathered up several spears in the vicinity where the attack had been made, laying at intervals. That night, April 1st the natives again

visited the Homestead and stole from the kitchen which had been left open - half a bag of flour and half a bag of sugar. Their tracks were seen in the morning but no natives came around at night. On finding these tracks I immediately went in pursuit of the natives in company with Tracker Charlie and followed them for a distance of ten miles, and there in the rough limestone gorge came upon a camp in which were many natives, male and female. Though my visit was a surprise one I was unable to effect the arrest of any of the offenders, whom I subsequently ascertained, were in the camp. This information I learnt from a lubra named Ruby and a boy named Unjen. These two I secured in the camp. Unjen was an employee at Bullita and ran away on the night of the spearing of Condon. The lubra some two months previously been taken away from the Depot Store by a native named Fishhook.

From the two natives secured I learnt that a native named Mut-Ba-Gurri had thrown the spear which struck Condon and had taken away the Gin Maggie. The two natives further informed me that Mut-Ba-Gurri and Fishhook were the two leaders in the attack on Condon, and both Mut-Ba-Gurri and Fishhook boasted in the camp that they would spear any white man that followed them.

Had my party been a strong one several arrests would have been effected. But myself and one Tracker were, considering the natives of the country in which the camps were found, practically powerless in the matter of effecting arrests. I found in the camp the carcass of a bullock being roasted and some of the stolen sugar.

The native Mut-Ba-Gurri when running away from the camp with the other natives shipped and threw a spear at Tracker Charlie and immediately disappeared amongst the limestone rocks. I returned to Bullita with the object of conveying

Condon to the Depot to catch a boat for Darwin. On my arrival there I found J.Keenan and Darcy had arrived from Auvergne, Keenan is in fact the owner of Bullita had learnt the news at Auvergne and he and Darcy had ridden to Bullita to render assistance.

Keenan had conveyed Condon to the Depot and left Darcy in charge of Bullita.

On the occasion of the spearing of Condon the natives had also speared three of the milking cows close to the homestead.

I remained at the homestead on the 3rd and 4th of April while Darcy put the cattle together, after which Darcy was to assist in an extended search for the offending natives. On the 4th April S.C. (Senior Constable) Dempsey and Tracker Bobby and a private boy joined me. On the following day I left Bullita with S.C. Dempsey, John Darcy, two Trackers and two private boys in search of the offending natives.

On April 9th tracks were found soon after rain in very rough country. The horses were here left and the party proceeded on foot in charge of S.C. Dempsey. After going about eleven miles S.C. Dempsey injured his ankle and was only able to continue another mile when he fell out and instructed me to take charge of the party and proceed as far as possible, as we felt that the natives of whom we were in pursuit were near at hand, as the discovery of tracks suggested.

I proceeded with the party for about three miles where we then came on a camp of natives at about 8pm. I awaited daylight before taking action, and endeavoured to surround the camp in which there were many natives.

I called upon the natives to stand and immediately one of them threw a spear at Darcy, which fortunately just missed him.

Fishhook shipped a spear and was in the act of throwing it at me when he was shot. Mut-Ba-Gurri rushed on one of the private boys (S.C.Dempsey's) with a bundle of spears in one hand and a spear poised as if to throw it in the other hand, saying at the same time "Come on you rotten bastards". Before he could throw the spear the boy shot him, the other natives made their escape. The country favouring them as it abounds in caves and immense outcrops of limestone.

As the two principals were dead and no food had been taken by the party on their forced march, they returned to the camp where the horses were left.

I have the honour to be.
Sir.
U.W. Holland

* * *



*Mounted Constable U W HOLLAND
Seated on police horse – second from left,
with pack horses
Timber Creek area between
1908 – 1911*

* * *

Attack on Condon by Natives
April 18, 1910.

Sir,

I have the honour to report that during my patrol re the murder on one N.J.J. Ward, I called at Bullita Station on the 4th inst. There found M.C. (Mounted Constable) Holland and Tracker Charlie who were attending these because of the spearing by natives there on the night of 30th March of Harry Condon. Mounted Constable Holland's report forwarded herewith gives the particulars.

On 5th inst - A party was formed, made up of the Mounted Constable, John Darcy, Acting Manager of Bullita, one of his blackboys, Tracker Charlie, and Bobby, a private boy and myself. The object of the party was to effect the arrest of the offending natives but all the party carried arms except Darcy's boy.

The party travelled in very rough limestone country, from the 5th inst. till 9th inst. When tracks of the natives were found which were apparently so fresh that there was a reasonable chance of overtaking the natives in a forced march. It was impossible to follow the tracks on horses, so after securing a pocket in which the horses could, with a degree of safety, be left. They and the gear were left and the party - taking no rations that they not be encumbered - followed the tracks on foot. The ground was fearfully rough, low limestone ridges extremely bare of earth in which were numerous caves and fissures, the latter necessitating one jumping from rock to rock like a goat describes most of the country the party traversed.

After we had gone about eleven miles I injured my ankle and at the end of another mile I was unable to continue. It was then about 6pm and as the other members of the party were still in good form and the chance of locating the natives camp that

night seemed very good, I instructed M.C Holland to continue and take charge of the party. This was done and the party returned to me next morning at about 8.30am. When M.C Holland made the same report to me as in his report attached. I interviewed the natives Unjen and Ruby on the 4th inst. They informed me that Mut-Ba-Gurri and Fishhook were the leaders of the attack on Condon and that Mut-Ba-Gurri had stated in camp that it was he who had speared Condon. They also informed me that Mut-Ba-Gurri and Fishhook stated they would spear any white man that followed them up. The Lubra Ruby put it "You look Mulaka, Fishhook and Mut-Ba-Gurri spearem you quick fellow suppose you chase him. Two fellows talk like that".

After the party returned to me we returned to where we had left the horses and then to Bullita and Timber Creek as reported by M.C. Holland. It is regrettable that the natives lost their lives but it is unavoidable. One could stand as a target for spearmen. The result of the affair may deter the natives for a while but I have no hope of the deterrent effect being other than passing. So numerous are the natives now bush who have been employed by whites - they are all runaways - that the real bush native is now disaffected through their influence. In rapid succession the Bullita and Humbert River atrocities have taken place. This because in the one case there was a lone white man and in the other case practicably the same condition as one of the two men is too old and feeble to be considered an obstacle by any of the natives .

In Condon's case as in Ward's there was treachery within the camp, there was no doubt that Condon's boys and lubras were privy to the attack on him even if they did not organise it. The boy Unjen stated that he was forced to go bush by the other natives, he is probably telling the truth. He is now working with Darcy at Bullita. The

boy Toby and the lubras Maggie and Minnie who were still bush are probably as deeply implicated in the attack as any of them but there is no evidence. But their running away strongly suggests it.

I have the honour to be
Sir
A.Dempsey, S.C

* * *

**WILLIAM MCKINNON - THE
ESCAPE AND SEARCH FOR SIX
PRISONERS**

This story was written by Bill McKinnon, who referred to his Journal entry dated 8th October 1934. Some information is not available in the following story, such as where Constable McKinnon was stationed at the time. He also does not elaborate on the weather conditions, although the indications are that it was particularly hot.

My prisoners broke and slipped their handcuffs during the night of 7th October and escaped. Tracker "Police Paddy" awoke me with this news at piccaninny daylight the following morning. All hands sprang to it immediately. Paddy and Carbine set off promptly on foot with no food or water, and carrying the .44 rifle. Their instructions were to pick up tracks and carry on till I caught up to them with the camels. I called Buck and Branson and they volunteered their services. We got an emergency supply of food together while the camels were being caught and shortly afterwards Buck, Branson, an Aboriginal and I set off with three riding camels, and a horse.

The only remaining prisoner, Barney, who was quite trustworthy, followed us with a riding camel and a pack camel, with a supply of beef, flour and water, with instructions to follow along in our tracks.

We spent nearly all of the first day in rough, mountainous country, covered over 40 miles and finished up in drizzling rain. At midnight we were all disturbed by Branson's dog. Looking up, we saw firesticks approaching. As we were camped near a waterhole, which was dry, we considered that this was our men walking straight into our arms. Branson and I crept up behind some bushes with a rifle and pistol and waited quietly, and then we went a little way towards them and waited again. When they got quite close to us I called out "Who is that?". We were both relieved and amused at our own scare when we heard Paddy's reply. He and Carbine had travelled on foot the whole day without a bite to eat and no water to drink, as there was not enough rain to even leave a small pool in the rocks. We boiled the billy, and gave them some food and all retired for the night.

Next day we were off shortly after daylight, we went right around the end of the ranges in hopes of cutting tracks where the prisoners had left the hills. We were fortunate enough to cut their tracks just before dark, almost obliterated by a shower. We intended travelling right into the night in an endeavour to beat the quarry to Wollara Wells on Liddle's property. Unfortunately a severe storm with heavy thunder and lightning broke, and we were forced to make camp in a desert oak patch in the sand hills at 7pm. We were in a desolate patch and were forced to tie the camels up because of the poison bush (emu bush) that usually abound in this type of country.

We covered a good 50 miles that day and were all stiff from the constant jogging of the camels that we could not move without suffering excruciating pain.

On the road again the third morning. We found that the quarry had not come in to the Wollara Wells and so we were at a dead end again. There was enough rain the

previous night to obliterate all tracks, which were very light at the best, as escapees invariably do their best to hide their tracks. (At dinner time on the second day we decided to make straight for E - Owa waterhole in hopes of cutting tracks. We gave Paddy the horse and sent him back into the hills to pick up tracks, with instructions to stick religiously to them. He carried a small portion of cooked food and a bottle of water).

On the third morning, after passing Wollara Wells we rode into Liddle's camp. He informed us that Paddy had been there during the morning, had obtained a fresh horse and a supply of food and water and pushed on. We had lunch with Mr Liddle, obtained a fresh supply of cooked meat (goat) and bread that he had prepared for us, and pushed on. We went straight to Inindie soak in the Kernott Ranges. On nearing the hills we dismounted and tied the camels up, and went on foot for the last mile in case the cries of our camels could be heard. We arrived at the soak to find that it was dry. On going further up the gully to see if we could find water, we discovered a small cave with the remains of small fires that were still warm, together with the tracks of the escapees. They had camped here the previous night.

We found the remains of a euro that they had eaten, and were puzzled as to how they caught it (subsequently learned that they took it from a dingo.) I forgot to mention that we had obtained a second spare horse from Mr Liddle.

At this juncture, on tallying up our remaining food, I found that we had only enough left for three men for a week and no certainty of water in the near future. We were able to fill one canteen in a small rock hole near the soakage, and saw tracks where the escapees had also had a fill.

I decided that I would have to go on alone with the trackers from here, and sent Buck,

Branson and their Aboriginals back. They were very reluctant to return but realized that nothing else could be done. During these days prisoner Barney had plodded along faithfully and caught us up after dusk at each camp.

On the fourth morning Carbine and I set out together, entering the great desert. We had not seen Paddy since lunch-time the second day and I was beginning to worry in case something had happened to him. Carbine and I travelled with only a waterbag and a bottle of water while Barney still followed with the canteens. Carbine and I cut tracks when we were only an hour on the road. They were quite distinct by now, the six men having travelled in single file, each man placing his feet right in the tracks of the man in front of him. We were able to trot along over a good portion of the country, and hopes were rising for an early capture. This was a terrific effort for the camels as the sand was very loose and we had to cross hill after hill. We were flogging them mercilessly to keep them going. Shortly after noon we came to a range which we had to prospect for a place to cross. We managed to get up and over after a considerable loss of time, and after again picking up the tracks we dismounted for dinner, and to give the camels a spell. I was in the act of lighting a fire when Paddy arrived on horseback. I was exceedingly relieved to see him again, and he was all smiles. He informed me that, after leaving Liddle's he gave his rations and a bottle of water to a native to carry, with directions to make straight for a certain place. That was the last he saw of the native, his food and water. He had camped the previous night on the opposite side of the Kernott Range to us, still on tracks. Early on the fourth morning he had worked across the range, making for Inindie Soak where he picked up our tracks. He was fortunate enough to find a small rock hole where he watered his horse and had a good drink himself. When he

caught us up he said "After I been give the horse a drink at the rock hole I came up on your tracks, I been glad like buggery to see you been catch'im tracks".

We had dinner - a sparing one, and carried on. We had only been travelling ten minutes when we came on the escapee's previous night camp. I was thrilled. The fires were still quite hot. They were carrying a firestick with them all the time, we frequently saw where ash and coals had fallen to the ground. There was a hill about half a mile in front of us. I sent Paddy on to climb it and to have a careful look around. This was my undoing, as I did not give him the necessary instructions to wait there for us as I intended to do, and I saw no more of him that day.

Carbine and I pushed on in hopes of catching him up. We travelled till dark and made camp. The camels were showing signs of distress through hard travelling and shortage of food. I measured our water supply and found we had exactly a quart pot full.

I said to Carbine "We won't boil the quart pot till Barney arrives, we have only one quart left and might want it". Barney, for the first time did not arrive. We went to bed without a mouthful to eat or drink, as one does not relish dry food when he is already half dead from thirst and has nothing to wash it down with. It was a miserable night.

On our fifth morning we had our quart pot of tea and a snack and carried on. We had only gone a mile when we arrived at a very salty native well. The water was several feet down and we were unable to give the camels a drink. Although it was nasty we both had a good drink, filled the waterbag and bottle and carried on again.

We saw where the escapees had a drink the previous afternoon. I was now full of hopes of arresting them before dinner and

we flogged the poor old camels along. We had only gone about another four miles when we met Paddy coming towards us with two prisoners - Mumberlin and Wong-We. I felt mad with myself, I knew at once what had happened. He had pushed on alone, caught up with the six men and raided them alone. He told me all about it. He fired at a third one and said he had wounded him. Paddy had been since lunchtime the previous day without a bite to eat, though he had a drink of the salty water. His horse was distressed. I felt that I could do anything to him, but at the same time I realized that he had done his best and would no doubt have visions of praise that would be lavished on him if he came in with the six escapees. I did some quick thinking, handcuffed the prisoners to the young desert oak trees and decided to carry on. The three of us went a few hundred yards while I was still questioning Paddy. I was under the impression that he had captured these men only just before we had come along, as he told me we were quite close to the spot. It was my intention to go "Flat out", to the spot, for the three of us to part there and follow up the men and bring them all back to where I had left the other two prisoners. But I found out that he had made the raid on the previous evening, just before dark. He was returning in the dark, got off the track and got hopelessly bushed. He was forced to camp, and set out again in the morning and had not been long back on the track when we met him.

We were clean out of food at this time and I decided that it would be foolish to carry on. We returned to the prisoners, boiled the billy and had a drink of tea. I gave the prisoners a drink at this stage, but they, like ourselves, had to go hungry.

I was much relieved at last when Barney arrived. He informed that he had travelled the previous night till he could not see our tracks, and had camped. He camped less than a mile from us. There was still some water in the canteen. I gave the horses a

drink that could ill be spared. I then divided our beef and flour that Barney was carrying. I gave Paddy a supply and instructed him to make a straight line for Ayers Rock, which was about 45 miles south west of where we were standing. He was to take Barney, Numberlin and Wong-We, the pack camel, Barney's riding camel and the horse. They were to wait at Ayers Rock for three days and look after the horse, and if we were not back to the Rock in three days, they were to hurry over the 100 miles dry stretch to Liddle's, and request him to send someone out to meet us with food and water.

I saw them on the road, and Carbine and I set out again with our riding camels. We got to the scene of Paddy's raid, saw where one man had fallen and saw blood on his tracks. We followed his tracks for some miles and could see that whatever the nature of his injury, it made no difference to his travelling ability. We could see that his objective was Ayers Rock. Deciding that Paddy would stand a good chance of capturing him, I decided to get on the tracks of some of the others. We travelled in a north westerly direction with the intention of cutting across the tracks (if any) of the men that were making for Mount Olga, where there were small springs. We did not go a great distance in this direction before coming on the tracks of two of them, also making for Ayers Rock. Apparently they had spread out to make pursuit more difficult.

We forced our camels along over huge sand hills, still flogging the poor brutes to keep them to a fast walk or a jog. They were suffering badly. We travelled on till dusk, pulled up in a depression between two sand hills and had a quart pot between us. We still went hungry as there was no food cooked and no time to cook it. We travelled on again in pitch dark, till nearly 11pm, when we were about two miles from the Rock. We dismounted then, in case the cries of the camels would be heard.

Leading them the remaining distance we had quite a nightmare. It was too dark to pick the track and as we were now in mulga scrub we continually walked straight into trees or stumbled over stumps or timber on the ground. Several times we were forced to double back in our tracks and go another way around. Eventually we stopped about a quarter of a mile from the Rock and tied the camels to a tree, hoping to be able to find them again. We were both famished for drink, but I encouraged Carbine by telling him of a hole of beautiful water that I know on the north west side of the Rock. We were not far from that position. We went on silently and scouted about all the rocks, caves and depressions in search of fires or the smell of smoke. Finding no signs for a distance of several hundred yards of either side of the waterhole, we then went down to get our drink. Imagine my dismay at finding it dry, the first time since I first commenced patrolling there. The hole is a good ten feet deep with sandy outer side and bottom, while the inner side is portion of the Rock itself. A converse wall several hundred feet high stands there, with an almost similar wall standing almost at right angles. When the rain falls a torrent of water pours over the top of this wall with the result that the hole is gouged out deeply and filled with rain water from the Rock. I was under the impression up to this visit that it was a permanent waterhole. As my watch showed midnight I was striking and sheltering matches while Carbine was digging down in the sand at the bottom of the hole with his hands to get soakage water. He dug down about two feet and we were able to fill the quart pot. Drink - we just sat there and drank. Even with those long hours toil crossing the desert sand hills during a blazing hot summer day and then continuing on into the night after a small drink of tea, I felt that my throat would never be quenched.

After sitting a few minutes we returned to the camels, which we had little trouble in

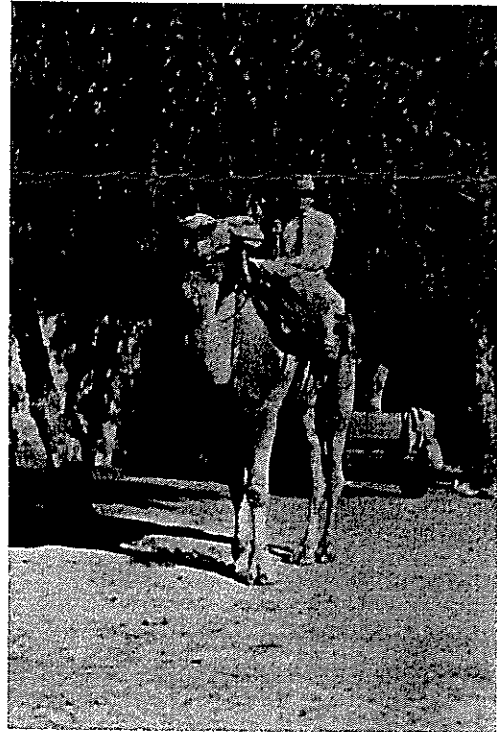
finding. We led them a bit closer to the Rock and then unsaddled them. One of them had been there several times before previously in my plant and knew his way about. Camels either have an extremely good memory and night sight, or have an extra keen sense of smell. He led off with another camel following and made straight for the hole.

Carbine and I collected wood and made a fire in a deep hole near our camp, as cooking had to be done. I put beef on to boil straight away. After unrolling our blankets we again went to the hole for more water and to see what the camels were doing. The poor brutes had gone right down into the hole, found there was no water - they could not get at our soakage - so just laid down in the hole where they remained all night. They were too tired, thirsty and lame to think of food.

I cooked the beef that night and turned in. Up again before daylight I made two dampers to see us on the road. I forgot to mention that I had made johnny cakes on first arrival at this camp and we made a meal of them.

On the morning of Saturday 13th October the cooking was done, camels caught and saddled and we were travelling by 7am. We were making for the south east side of the Rock where Maggie Springs is situated. I was quite confident that the camels would get a drink here. Heavy storm clouds were travelling overhead and heavy thunder rolling. We arrived at the spring and again to my consternation, found it as dry as a bone. I decided that we would have to set to with a camp sheet for a container, use our quart pot as a vessel to fill it with after digging a soak, and water the camels that way. It looked very promising for rain, but one is so often disappointed with storms in this country that it is safe to say that it will rain after it has actually commenced. We were just about to commence work when Carbine

jumped up and said "Yo-Kununna track". He pointed to a single faint track on damp ground and could see no more. The sides of the Rock are full of caves, tunnels, etc., in the vicinity of this spring, and there is also huge heaps of broken rock that has fallen from the main body of the Rock many years ago.



*Bill McKinnon
On Camel Patrol*

I told Carbine that I would search in those adjacent to the spring and instructed him to hurry around towards the south to see if he could find anything. The camels were tied up. We rushed off and commenced our search. After a lapse of about ten minutes, as though in answer to a prayer for the sake of the camels, rain commenced to fall in almost a solid sheet. In a matter of minutes we were about to see a sight that cannot be seen too often - great sheets of water pouring off the Rock. Heavy wind was blowing which whipped these streams into fine spray which penetrated right into the caves. The ground was covered with running water and the camels were able to drink from the ground where they were standing. The rain finished in a quarter of

an hour and the clouds cleared right away. Evidently the camels were in the same condition as we were the night before, and just drank, drank and drank.

This, of course, meant that there were no further tracks to be found of the escapees' movements before the rain. Therefore I put Carbine on his camel and sent him two miles out from the Rock with the idea of circling around it in case anyone had left at that time. I carried on with the search and kept watch over the waterhole - all surface water disappeared almost immediately after the rain had stopped. At about noon I heard a shot towards the south. I hurried around and saw Carbine up on some broken rock. I called out and was informed by him that he was returning from the south west and, coming close to the Rock he saw Yo-Kununna sitting on a high rock watching in my direction, and failed to see Carbine's approach from behind. Carbine called on him to come down. Yo-Kununna scrambled down and commenced to run away, when Carbine fired a shot at him but failed to stop him. I instructed Carbine to commence a thorough search of the rocks from the south end, while I commenced from the north. I had been searching for about five minutes in the rocks, caves and tunnels, when, on bending at the entrance to a cave I smelt a decidedly Aboriginal odour from inside. I heard a scramble and caught a glimpse of Yo-Kununna. He could not understand English so I called his name several times, hoping he would come out. The next thing I knew, a stone hurtled past my head, close enough to feel the draught created by it. He rushed further in, dropping on his side and wormed his way into an inner tunnel through which a shaft of light was showing. When only his feet and legs were showing I fired a pistol shot near his feet but he kept going.

Rushing in after him I placed my left hand on the side of the entrance and, bending down to his position, another stone thrown

by him struck me on the knuckle of my left index finger, crippling the left hand for a time. Taking a quick glimpse I saw him facing me and picking up another stone. Keeping my head clear, I pointed the pistol in his direction without taking any aim whatsoever and fired a second shot. I called out again as I had been doing, but got no response and could hear nothing. I did not know whether he was armed with any native weapon or whether I had injured him. I called Carbine who was approaching. While I covered the tunnel with my pistol Carbine spoke in his dialect and went in. He said "Yo-Kununna, come out". Yo-Kununna replied and said he would not come out. Carbine and I then carried him out into the open and saw that he was badly injured. We had just commenced the task of carrying and lowering him a distance of about one hundred and forty feet to the ground when Tracker Paddy arrived with his party. Prisoner Barney came up and assisted us to lower Yo-Kununna. He spoke in his dialect. I said to Carbine "What is he saying?". He replied "Him talking like die now". Yo Kununna frequently called for "cuppie" which means water. I personally took him a drink whenever he called for it, and the Trackers did what they could to make him comfortable. At about 3pm I took the other prisoners to the waterhole for a drink, and when we returned Yo-Kununna was dead. I superintended the digging of a grave and we buried him.

We all had a well earned rest for the remainder of the day.

The two camels used by Carbine and myself were lame, stiff and famished, and the drink they had that morning did nothing to improve them. They were in such a condition that it was cruelty to ask them to do any more. Moreover, our food was now finished. I knew that even if we went straight in to Liddle's we would have nothing left when we got there, so I decided it was useless to carry on after the

other escapees. During the rest of the afternoon I cooked the remainder of our beef and flour, and the Trackers filled the canteens.

On the morning of the 14th October we set out on the 100 mile dry stretch from Ayers Rock to Liddle's "Angus Downs" Station. We started out with 20 gallons of water for six men and a horse. Each night for two nights the horse had four gallons, leaving us with a total of 12 gallons between the six men.

On the 15th October I came across a well known Afghan, "Mohomet Usef", whose tracks I had seen on the Aboriginal Reserve with his camels and a number of natives. (I took him along with his consent to Buck's "Middleton Ponds" Station where I later served a notice on him requiring him to appear at Alice Springs Court House to answer various charges.) Usef was almost out of water and his camels were in a bad way, owing to living weeks in the desert country on a reserve where he had been trapping and poisoning dingoes.

At midday on the third day from Ayers Rock all food and water gave out. We were still a considerable distance from Liddle's. Immediately after lunch I started Carbine ahead on the horse with instructions to get to Liddle's as quickly as he could without distressing the horse, and to inform Mr Liddle that we would be there that night, requiring a meal. We arrived at Liddle's at 10.30pm after travelling in pitch dark. We lost the pad early in the evening and just made in the direction of Liddle's which we found with little trouble, Carbine having taken the precaution of lighting a bonfire to guide us. Mr Liddle had prepared a pot of hot stew, bread, jam and goat's cream for Usef and myself, and hot bread and beef for the Aboriginals. It was extremely good of him and it was a most acceptable and appreciated meal.

We took the day off next day for the good of all concerned including the camels. The following day we set out for Middleton Ponds. After lunch we had gone only a few hundred yards when Usef's camel dropped dead. It was aged and probably succumbed on account of having too much water after a long fast.

Usef later, in the Alice Springs Police Court, attempted to show that it had died as a result of having been forced along at too fast a rate (3 M.P.H) by Constable McKinnon, he having forgotten that we had spent one whole day at Liddle's.

We arrived at Middleton Ponds on the 19th October from where we carried on with usual patrol duties in effecting further arrests. We arrived at Alice Springs on the 25th November with a party totalling 20 persons including Trackers, witnesses, prisoners, three young half castes for admission to the institution, and a witnesses' baby.

When the Supreme Court sessions took place at Alice Springs in February 1935 the Solicitor for the defence made serious allegations against my manner of obtaining statements from the prisoners, and of my conduct towards them generally. I denied the allegations and drew attention to the fact that enquiries from both Europeans and the natives themselves on my "South west patrol" district would reveal, amongst other things, that I have in the past given them some of the fairest and best treatment that they have ever received at the hands of Government Officials. I further challenged the Solicitor concerned to go out and do a general patrol of my district under ordinary favourable conditions, not to mention all I went through on this particular patrol - and at the end of it to say - as he and other irresponsible persons had already said, that the Police camel patrol is merely a holiday trip with no responsibility or risk.

As a result of the publicity the case received in the press, the Governor General appointed a Board of Enquiry to investigate the suggestions of my ill-treatment of Aborigines, and the shooting of Yo-Kununna at Ayers Rock. The Board consisted of Professor J.B. Cleland, Anthropologist, Chairman; Rev. J. Baxton, Secretary of the Aborigines Friends Association of S.A; V.J. White, Deputy Chief Protector of Aborigines in the Northern Territory, and Mr C.P. Mountford, Secretary.

The Enquiry commenced at Alice Springs on the 27th May 1935 after having been advertised by notices posted up all around the town, and after I had been officially informed of the commencement one and a half hours before it started. The Enquiry finished on the 22nd June, after several cattle stations and Ayers Rock had been visited, and the remains of Yo-Kununna removed for conveyance to Adelaide Museum where I understand they are still down in the basement.

The Board's findings were published throughout the Australian press seven weeks before I was officially advised and then only because I had queried the reason for non-payment of a normal salary increment. This was "deferred" for twelve months as a result of the Board's findings that I had thrashed two young persistent petty thieves at Hermannsburg Mission at the request of the Superintendent of the Mission. That was the only adverse finding of the Board.

(Rev. Sexton told me that a member of his Committee, who had some years previously been a member of this Police Force, had advised that the shooting at Ayers Rock was completely unwarranted as, had he been in my shoes he would have surrounded the Rock and starved the escapee out). The members of the Board, though most thorough in their investigations, were kind to me and were

as considerate as they could be at all times. While travelling around the country I put myself on as the cook of the party.

RECOGNITION OF POLICE TRACKERS & THEIR FAMILIES

At the 2002 AGM, Mr Graham McMahon (now on the Committee) raised the possibility of recognising the dedication and efforts of Police Trackers throughout the Northern Territory in some way. It was immediately recognised that to name each and every one of them would be an impossible task so it was agreed that a 'generic' plaque should be struck to be placed at every police station in the Northern Territory.

Agreement has now been reached on the wording of the plaques and the Northern Territory Police are currently working on getting the plaques made.

This plaque has been placed in recognition of the contribution made to policing in the Northern Territory by the Aboriginal Police Trackers and their families.

Since 1870 their skills, perseverance and dedication to duty have played a vital role in outback policing.

**Paul White
Commissioner of Police
2003**

It is anticipated that the first plaque will be unveiled at the Tennant Creek Police Station to coincide with the Commemorative Event that we are holding for the 120th anniversary of the death of Mounted Constable John Charles Shirley on 8 November 2003.

All members should have already received their information concerning this event. If you have not received it, please contact the office and we will ensure that it will be forwarded to you.